ALBERT;

OR, THE

WILDS OF STRATHNAVERN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF

LOUISA, OR THE COTTAGE ON THE MOOR; DUNCAN AND PEGGY, PENITENTS OF GODSTOW, ST. CLAIR OF THE ISLES, ST. MARGARET'S CAVE, MODERN TIMES, FARMER OF INGLEWOOD FOREST, PILGRIM OF THE CROSS, &c. &c.

"Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
Her snaky crest: a quick returning pang
Shoots through the conscious heart, where honour still,
And great design, against the oppressive load
Of luxury, by fits impatient, heave."

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ALBERT.

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CHAPTER I.

A Family Party.

IN an old family mansion, situated in the north riding of Yorkshire, for many years resided John St. Austyn, esquire, with his lady and two children, a son and daughter. This gentleman possessed a respectable fortune, which he had not *time* either to increase or materially diminish since it devolved to him, being ever busily employed during the morning in some favourite rustic employment, and in th evening usually so overpowered with wine

as to render pleasure and business alike impossible.

Mrs. St. Austyn, descended from an ancient and noble family, possessed all the haughtiness that such distinctions are calculated to inspire in narrow minds; to which was added a disposition naturally avaricious. Married at an early age to a man whose only recommendation was family and fortune, and immured with him from all company pleasing to her, an inherent weakness of understanding prompted her to neglect those resources that can truly enliven solitude; and she knew no gratification superior to what a novel could afford: thus her heart was never wounded with real domestic distress, her sensibility being entirely reserved for the *pompous* sorrows of favourite *valiant* heroes and beauteous *matchless* heroines, ever regarding herself as some angelic, patient, suffering wife, buried in a wilderness from all the joys of society.

Though from the fruit of such an union much

much was not to be expected, yet Frederic and Gertrude St. Austyn joined to good persons understandings which, had they been properly cultivated, might have proved an honour to society; but the follies of their parents slurred the fair tablets which nature had rendered capable of receiving the noblest impression.

The only surviving relative of Mrs. St. Austyn was a widowed sister, who had resided for many years in the milder climates of France and Italy, with an invalid husband, after whose death she had returned to England about the period that Frederic attained his fourteenth, and Gertrude her eleventh year.

Though a distant coldness had subsisted for some years between the sisters, yet Mrs. St. Austyn no sooner learned the arrival of her sister, and that, being childless, she was left sole heir to her husband's possessions, than she determined to seek a reconciliation, though it could not be obtained without humiliating concessions on

her part, as she had in truth widened a breach between her sister and her parents, who in consequence had left *her* sole inheritrix to their fortune, Mrs. Stanhope, at the age of twenty-four, having married, without their approbation, the only son of a rich citizen—thus grossly contaminating their noble blood by an alliance with a trader.

As avaricious people, and not unfrequently proud ones, are sometimes guilty of meanness, Mrs. St. Austyn's letter was not perfectly clear of that failing. Mrs. Stanhope viewed it in the true light, with a mixture of pity and contempt, yet without a particle of enmity; and after some short deliberation replied, that as friendship was ever desirable among relatives, she should be glad to see her sister, with Mr. St. Austyn and the children, as soon as they found it convenient.

This invitation was accepted with pleasure by Mrs. St. Austyn, but declined by her husband, who could not resolve to be

absent

absent from his rural sports in the month of October. The lady, therefore, accompanied by her children, began her journey, and in a few days reached the seat of her sister, which was in the county of Dorset, and situated in the vale of Whitehart.

Mrs. Stanhope received them with affectionate politeness, though in a manner that shewed she felt no humiliation from being considered as the widow of a British merchant. No mention was made of former grievances—a circumstance extremely pleasing to Mrs. St. Austyn, who felt her consequence lessened by the unaffected manners of her sister, whose natural elegance, in spite of a shade of melancholy that marked her features, shone through all, the unadorned dress of widowhood only rendering her person the more interesting. Though forty years had faded the roses of her cheek, and sorrow had banished the dimpled smiles that once dwelt around her mouth, her eyes had lost none of their lustre or penetrating accuracy, and fixing

them alternately on Frederic and Gertrude, she endeavoured to develop their characters from their features. With their exterior she was perfectly satisfied, but by no means so with their acquirements, as they became farther acquainted. The education of Frederic had been shamefully neglected, and simply consisted in having been taught to read ill, and write yet worse. Gertrude, though sweet-tempered, already began to shew symptoms of affectation, the consequent result of the tuition of such a mother, and the improper readings she had already learned to delight in.

With dispositions and pursuits so very different as were those of Mrs. St. Austyn and her sister (for the mind of the latter was stored with useful knowledge, and her heart dignified by every sentiment that can grace humanity), it may be easily surmised that they were not much entertained with each other's company. Mrs. St. Austyn particularly found her time hang yet more heavily than in Yorkshire, and determined

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to shorten her visit, satisfied that the coldness that had heretofore subsisted was entirely banished. Mrs. Stanhope, who was superior to all disguise, in delicate but energetic terms touched on the faults she discovered in the education of both her nephew and niece; but Mrs. St. Austyn could allow of none in Gertrude, whom she declared she had taken infinite pains with, and hoped hereafter to see a finished model of *refined* female perfection.

Mrs. Stanhope's only reply was an involuntary "Pshaw!" but some little time after, resuming the discourse, she entreated warmly that Frederic might be sent to a public school; or, if that could not be complied with, that he might have an informed and virtuous tutor at home. In this desire Mrs. St. Austyn coincided, as without some reform in the education of her son, she feared he might become as great a boor as his father.

CHAPTER II.

Youthful Outlines.

As before observed, to a mind like Mrs. St. Austyn's the avocations and amusements at the Vale afforded no recreation: she was too *delicate* to brave the air on a frosty morning with her sister in visiting the sick tenants; and such was the *irritability* of her *nerves*, that the distress of the vulgar always inspired her with anger; for, as she frequently observed, it raised her wonder how they could suppose people of rank and fortune were to listen to their paltry concerns and distresses. Did they not employ them, and were they not paid for their services? Surely it was the height of insolence to expect further.—

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Among Mrs. Stanhope's favourite amusements were drawing and music—both equally disagreeable to her sister, who had never possessed either taste or perseverance to acquire the first, and for the latter she had no ear. To complete all, Mrs. Stanhope's style of reading was so dissimilar to what she had been accustomed to, that her library, though extensive and well furnished, could scarcely afford a book with which she could beguile a tedious hour.

Frederic and Gertrude, on the contrary, were delighted with their aunt, and would willingly have entered into all her pursuits; naturally possessed of good dispositions, the dormant spark of activity only wanted the breath of instruction to kindle it to a flame: but the errors of a series of years were not to be done away in so short a space as their visit allowed; and Mrs. Stanhope reflected with regret, that such promising characters would in all probability

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bility be stifled before they could attain maturity.

A month having elapsed, which to Mrs. St. Austyn appeared insupportably tedious, she prepared for her return, having obtained from her sister the promise of a visit the ensuing summer. At length all was ready for their departure, and the lady with her children retook the road to Yorkshire. For the first five miles little discourse passed, when Frederic chanced to make some observation respecting his aunt, that awoke all his mother's rancour.—"She is a strange unaccountable woman," replied she; "your advantage alone could make me submit to her whimsies; but her fortune is too considerable to be neglected."

"Indeed, mamma," returned Gertrude, "I began to love her dearly, she is so good and humane!"

"Good and humane!—weak, eccentric, and ridiculous—a butt for every knave and cheat to play upon. But I am not surprised—

prised—she was ever the same; and though now possessing an almost-princely fortune, is ever engaged in some despicable pursuit, under the pretence of philanthropy."

"I cannot think such good-natured actions are either weak or ridiculous," answered Frederic; "every one seems to love her; the old folks look so grateful and happy, and the children skip with such pleasure when they see her coming, that I wish with all my heart you would adopt the same method with our poor people in Yorkshire."

"Indeed I shall do no such thing. Does not the parish provide plentifully for the poor? 'Tis well you are not entirely with your aunt, or I see plainly that you would imbibe all her particularities."

"And why should I not?" returned Frederic, bluntly; "they never injured her. You say she is immensely rich; and she told me herself she had been the

 happiest

happiest of women until Mr. Stanhope died."

"Was Mr. Stanhope very young, handsome, and accomplished, as well as rich, mamma?" demanded Gertrude; "and did they run away to Scotland, as I have heard you say they had not their parents' consent?"

"No indeed," answered Mrs. St. Austyn; "my sister did not even palliate her disobedience by endeavouring to keep her marriage a secret, but had it publicly and indelicately bawled in the parish church for three weeks. Nor did Mr. Stanhope, at least in my opinion, possess any of those personal advantages or acquirements that are said to excuse such a step; at the time of their marriage he was above thirty, had never been handsome; and as for accomplishments, I suppose he was on a parallel with his lady, as their pursuits and inclinations were similar."

"Dear me!" replied Gertrude, very seriously,

riously, "as Mr. Stanhope was neither very young nor handsome, mamma, I am astonished how she could fall in love with him."

"He was likewise a trader," answered Mrs. St. Austyn; "and a young woman of birth who forms such an alliance, is unpardonable."

"As for that," returned Frederic, "I don't understand it; but I am sure she is very sensible; for, when we read together, she explained every thing so well and clear, that if I was with her, I should like reading better than ever I did in my life."

"She was always fond of books," replied Mrs. St. Austyn; "but her pursuits and understanding were ever too masculine to be pleasing to me. The light and feminine part of literature she ever pretended to despise, with some few exceptions; nor were her manners more suited to her sex. No weather withheld her, if she was inclined to walk; and I remember once, when we were both children, and dressed

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for an assembly, she happened to see a duck in a pond seized by a dog, when, regardless of either danger or delicacy, she rushed in up to the breast in water, grasped the dog by the throat, and bore off the duck in triumph. Another time, in frosty weather, the footman having shot some birds that resorted near the house to pick up crumbs, in a fury of passion, she struck him before company. In short, you know not the plague our parents had with her. Our governess she used to turn into ridicule; and the poor woman having once bought the French romance of Cleopatra to amuse us, she not only wrote ludicrous notes, and drew frightful caricatures throughout the whole book, but ever afterwards called mademoiselle by that name, until at length my mother was obliged to interfere, and strictly forbid her. Another of her whims was, that observing all other women of fashion made choice of the most beautiful lapdogs they could procure, she, on the contrary, selected the most frightful:

ful; so that it was no uncommon sight to meet her surrounded with a group of ugly rough curs, that would have disgraced a Smithfield drover."

"But what, my dear mamma," demanded Gertrude, "could be her motive for choosing such frightful creatures? I am sure I should have preferred the handsome ones."

"Her motive, she used to say, was, that the pretty ones would procure friends by their beauty, while the others would be worried, neglected, or starved to death. To complete her picture, she was once bit through the arm in releasing a sow that hung in a gate; in which charming employment Mr. Stanhope first saw her, or she might dearly have paid for her temerity."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Gertrude, "I wonder how she dared touch such a nasty frightful creature. I think I should have run away—though indeed I should have left the poor animal with reluctance: had

it

it been a lamb, I should not have hesitated a moment."

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. St. Austyn; "but releasing a filthy dirty sow is a strange situation for a woman of delicacy to be seen in."

"Why, has not a sow as much feeling as a lamb? I am sure I should love a woman the better for it," said Frederic.

"Certainly one has as much feeling as the other; but there are rules to be observed by women of delicacy and decorum to distinguish them from the vulgar, without which they cannot be amiable in the eyes of a *man of sentiment.*"

"I have frequently read," said Gertrude, "of beautiful ladies who have rescued sheep, kids, lambs, doves, and other innocent pretty creatures, but never such odious animals."

With such conversation did Mrs. St Austyn and her children beguile the time; and though the hearts and understanding of the latter were naturally good, yet the example

example of a mother could not fail of its effect, and, if it did not entirely stifle their real disposition, at least misled and disguised it with artificial sentiment, and the mockery of delicacy and feeling.

CHAPTER III.

A Tutor; or, such Men are.

On Mrs. St. Austyn's arrival at home, she informed her husband of all that had passed. That she was on terms of friendship with her sister gave him pleasure, as he was by no means insensible to the power of gold; but he felt piqued at the dislike she had expressed at his son's education.—"What the plague would the woman have?" said he: "we don't intend the boy for a parson, nor yet a schoolmaster; he has had

as

as much education as ever I had, and I never found more was necessary."

Mrs. St. Austyn's reply was a palliative one; she coincided, though contrary to her real opinion, with her husband, but represented in strong terms, that acting in this case contrary to her sister's express desire, might occasion a fresh breach; that the expence of a tutor would be immaterial; and that, at all events, they had better engage one, as it was more than probable, if Mrs. Stanhope was satisfied with Frederic, she might double his fortune.

Such reasoning was unanswerable but by acquiescence; Mr. St. Austyn therefore at once gave way, saying—"Well, let her have her humour; I shall hunt to-morrow with sir Thomas Beagle—I will name it to him—perhaps he can recommend a proper person."

Mr. St. Austyn was not regardless of this promise, and the next day at dinner opened the business to his friend, who, after some consideration, mentioned the

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son of the rector, who, he informed the squire, had refused to follow the profession of his father, though he had been educated for that purpose, and was accounted both a learned and accomplished young man.

"The very thing!" interrupted the squire. "I have frequently seen him; he is a fine spirited fellow; I don't think there is a cleaner horseman or a better shot in the whole country."

With such powerful qualifications for a preceptor, Mr. St. Austyn determined to apply immediately, and accordingly, the ensuing morning, called at the rectory; where making known his intention, his offer was accepted with pleasure, the young gentleman promising to enter on his new employ in the course of the ensuing week.

With this arrangement Mrs. St. Austyn, when informed, expressed her satisfaction; she had heard Charles Berners was uncommonly graceful and accomplished in his manners, and flattered herself that he would

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render her son not totally unlike those distinguished characters she was peculiarly attached to.

Charles Berners was true to the appointed time. He had just attained his twenty-first year, was handsome in his person, fascinating in his behaviour, and in his education no care had been neglected: but unfortunately he had imbibed opinions on peculiar subjects that empoisoned the whole; he was loose in his ideas respecting women, free in his thoughts of religion, well skilled in fallacious argument, and in controversy seldom failed to overpower his antagonist, if not by truth, by volubility and the specious sophistry of his reasoning.

His youth, to a wiser man than Mr. St. Austyn, or a more rational woman than his lady, might have proved an objection; but to them it was none; his exterior appearance afforded complete satisfaction, and they considered no farther.

Such was the person chosen to educate Frederic St. Austyn, who possessed a

strong

strong capacity and a feeling heart, though, like a rich but neglected soil, it had as yet produced nothing but weeds.

To say he was pleased with Charles Berners would be too cold an expression; he was enraptured, and regarded him as a model of perfection that it was his highest ambition to imitate. Nor was Charles, very speedily, less a favourite with the rest of the family; the squire, on a very short acquaintance, declared him at once the best and cleverest fellow in the world; Gertrude thought him like some of the charming heroes she was continually reading of; and Mrs. St. Austyn deplored in secret, in the genuine language of romance, that her cruel destiny had forbidden her being the wife of such a man.

To become so great a favourite had not been without endeavours on the part of Berners; he hunted, drank, sung, and told stories with the squire—was sentimental, and particularly attentive to his lady—was sportive, and ready to gratify all the girlish

ish whims of Gertrude; in fine, he adapted himself to all humours but those of his pupil, with whom he used no disguise; for the attachment of Frederic had raised a reciprocal attention on his part, and he determined to exert all his endeavours and influence to educate him in a manner consonant with his own ideas of happiness and pleasure.

At the appointed time Mrs. Stanhope paid her promised visit, and though not perfectly satisfied with the tuition of Berners, yet he behaved with such circumspection under her inquiring eye during her stay, that he gave her no occasion to complain openly; she nevertheless did not fail to observe to her sister, that she should have been much better satisfied had her nephew's improvement been entrusted to a tutor of a riper age. With Gertrude she was yet less pleased; she saw the follies she dreaded increasing in strength, and the affectation of delicacy and sentiment taking place of candour and simplicity.

Mrs. Stanhope's health had been precarious since the death of her husband, and finding her illness rather increase than lessen, she informed her sister that she had thoughts of returning to the Continent for a year or two—venturing a kind of half wish that Gertrude might accompany her; but Mrs. St. Austyn declaring that the society of her daughter was all that rendered life bearable in the horrid solitude in which she was immured, she instantly relinquished her intention, and dropped the subject.

Neither Frederic nor Gertrude was so entirely pleased with their aunt as they had been the year before: the former already, from the documents of Charles, could not regard a woman as a mirror of perfection; and Gertrude began to dread the keenness of the satire which she frequently launched against her favourite pursuits; yet she esteemed and looked up to her with a respect she felt for no other person.

On Mrs. Stanhope's return to the Vale, she settled the domestic economy of her household, arranged her estate with the most minute exactness, and in the autumn departed for Italy.

CHAPTER IV.

The Effects of erroneous Education, and Private Theatricals.

As Berners' tenets were in general easy, specious, and alluring, they soon took root in the uncultivated mind of Frederic, who in three years became so great a proficient, not only in them, but likewise in different branches of literature, that his father regarded him as a prodigy. He had obtained a knowledge of Latin and French, had completely mastered the rusticity of his

his manners, and acquired an ease of behaviour that rendered him peculiarly pleasing. To counterpoise these advantages, he had learned to hold religion in contempt, as derogatory to a man of understanding, and only necessary as a check on the vulgar. His opinion of women was not more favourable: he regarded them as merely given for the gratification of man, made to be wooed, and easy to be won; by nature and education incapable of friendship, and unfit to be entrusted with any thing beyond common occurrences. Yet with these ideas the skilful Berners had blended the specious art of concealing his real sentiments, and taught him to treat the sex with all those little indescribable attentions that gain on the female heart. With Mrs. Stanhope, who still remained abroad, he maintained, an uninterrupted correspondence: from the ease and sprightliness of his letters she judged favourably of his improvement, frequently sending both to Gertrude and

himself testimonials of her friendship and approbation.

Gertrude, now in her sixteenth year, would have been completely amiable but for the errors of her education, which had imperceptibly led her into follies; for, her mind constantly employed on the *distress* of some damsel, the *passion* of my lord, or the *distraction* of sir Harry, her heart languished for an adventure in which herself might act the heroine. Thus the artful attention of Berners, who was the handsomest man she had ever conversed with, could not fail to make an impression, which she concluded was love, everlasting love, in all the enthusiasm of romance.

On the part of Berners this step had not been entirely premeditated; but, young, effervescent, and lively, he found it difficult to live entirely in the same house with a beautiful girl without emotion, particularly as the imprudence of Mrs. St. Austyn frequently threw him into very awkward situations. He had undertaken

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to instruct Gertrude in the French language and drawing; and as if those lessons, which were often given *tête à-tête*, did not afford sufficient opportunity, the evil genius of Gertrude contrived yet another snare. Mrs. St. Austyn was seized with a rage for private theatricals, in which though she did not figure herself, yet it afforded a scene of amusement, by collecting company that was highly gratifying to her; though she frequently declared that it was merely to oblige the young people.

As a dearth of actors in such cases, and at such a distance from the capital, may easily be surmised, it was with difficulty that they could collect young folks enough to perform a piece. Romeo and Juliet was that fixed on, in which Frederic had chosen the part of Mercutio; Gertrude had been appointed the Juliet; and for want of a Romeo, Berners had undertaken to study it.

Before the rehearsal of this folly, the

attachment of Berners had only shewn itself in silent attentions; but thus insensibly thrown off his guard, he made to Gertrude an open declaration of his passion, which, though received with timidity and blushes, yet placed her at the height of her wishes, as it stamped her a woman, to see a lover at her feet. This event was, however, unsuspected by the whole family; for, had Mrs. St. Austyn been apprised, she would doubtless have felt no inclination to second her daughter's weakness, though it originated in herself. Secrecy too was desirable to Berners; and to Gertrude it gave a double zest; for what would a love adventure be worth, that had neither privacy nor persecution to recommend it? And in the present case she preferred the latter.

Notwithstanding this imprudence, it is but justice to confess that the purest modesty reigned in every thought and action of Gertrude, whom erroneous education rather than levity had led into folly. Neither had Berners any idea of seduction,

nor

nor indeed any settled plan; only, as he surmised that he might some time marry, he concluded that, could a match with Gertrude be brought to bear, she would be more desirable than any other he knew, both as to person and fortune; for, as to her romantic pursuits, those gave him no concern—she was enchanting as a woman, and he sought no further.

CHAPTER V.

Some Men may die, and scarcely be missed.

FREDERIC had nearly attained his twentieth, and Gertrude completed her sixteenth year, when one evening the squire, after having dined heartily and drank yet more so, fell insensibly from his usual lethargic afternoon's doze into an apoplectic

fit, from which all endeavours to recover him were vain; and after a few convulsive struggles, he expired. The death of such a man gave little real concern to any but his children: Mrs. St. Austyn wept, because it was customary on such occasions; but her heart bore no sympathy with her eyes; she found herself freed from a painful bondage, and congratulated herself accordingly.

The first surprise over, Mr. St. Austyn's will was read. Gertrude was left dependent on her mother, whose fortune had been settled on herself at marriage; and Frederic, at the age of twenty-one, declared sole heir; until which period, supposing him to reside with his mother, his allowance was settled at five hundred pounds yearly.

This arrangement, as Frederic afterwards reflected on it, was by no means satisfactory; he wished to see the world, and with so small a stipend it was impossible to rush into its dissipations. Berners, however,

however, soon removed that difficulty, by informing him that in London he would find numbers ready to advance any sum on such ample security as he could give.

Gertrude, on the contrary, was perfectly satisfied; she loved her mother, and considered no further. Not so Berners. Her dependent situation was highly displeasing to him, as he regarded it as an almost insurmountable bar to an union with her, as he was not in love sufficiently to think of a cottage and bread-and-butter. He however continued his attentions, and renewed his vows, though he regarded them as wind; and, once uttered, if not forgotten, they were totally disregarded; while, on the contrary, Gertrude considered them as the genuine effusions of disinterested love, incapable of change or decay.

Frederic had immediately written his aunt an account of his father's death, and as speedily as the posts would allow, both his mother and himself received letters of condolence, at the same time informing

them she should be in England in a short time; requesting, if change of place should be agreeable to Mrs. St. Austyn, that she would consider the house at the Vale as her own.

Mrs. St. Austyn declined a change of situation for the present; her resolution was already taken; it was, to hasten to London as soon as the first three months of her mourning were expired—a determination that gave great pleasure to Frederic and Berners, and that was by no means displeasing to Gertrude.

CHAPTER VI.

A Widow's Grief, and a handsome Stranger.

WITH delight Mrs. St. Austyn saw the time arrive that was appointed for her removal to London; where she was scarcely settled before she was joined by Mrs. Stanhope, whose health was much restored, her spirits recruited, and her whimsical eccentricities, as her sister denominated them, nothing diminished. With kindness she received the congratulations of her sister, with pleasure those of her children, and for the present, at the earnest entreaty of Mrs. St. Austyn, took up her residence in town, hiring a small ready-

 furnished

furnished house, as she well knew that Mrs. St. Austyn and herself would be mutual restraints on each other, did they occupy the same. With Frederic she was more satisfied than with Gertrude, for, possessed of more art, he in a great measure concealed his errors; but, attached to them both, she resolved to spare no pains in her power to remedy what she found blameable in either.

Though Mrs. St. Austyn's impatience had hurried her to town, the death of her husband was too recent to suffer her to appear any where but in private parties. But determined as soon as possible to throw off all restraint, and enter the world with eclat, she desired her milliner to provide her with a young person proper to assist in the decoration of her person, as her present attendant was not sufficiently skilled in the fashionable arts for a London abigail. Accordingly one morning, as she was sitting with her family and

Mrs.

Mrs. Stanhope, the servant informed her that a young woman from Mrs. Mosely requested to be admitted.

"Let her call another time—I am engaged at present.—It is only," added she, turning to Mrs. Stanhope, "a new servant that Mosely has recommended, and so warmly, that I could not refuse to see her; though I am almost certain she will never do for me, for she is of all things what I most detest—a decayed gentlewoman."

"By all means see her," replied Mrs. Stanhope; "you perhaps judge too hastily: you surely do not consider me a stranger."

Mrs. St. Austyn ordered the young person to be admitted, who entered timidly on seeing a party, as she doubtless expected to have found the lady alone. Some author has observed, that a good person is a letter of recommendation. If so, this young woman bore a very powerful one, it being scarcely possible to behold a more interest-

ing countenance, added to which a form graceful as ever painter drew or poet feigned.

"You are the person Mosely recommended, I suppose?" said Mrs. St. Austyn, viewing her with scrutinizing curiosity. "I did not expect you were so young. What age are you?"

"Eighteen, madam."

"You scarcely appear so much. You have, I suppose, never been in service, and consequently have much to learn?"

"I have indeed much to learn, madam," answered the stranger, a slight blush overspreading her cheek; "yet I am not too old to improve."

"You can do something, however," returned the lady. "Can you dress hair? Mosely told me you understood something of millinery."

"Mrs. Mosely, madam, has been kind enough to approve the work I executed for her, and has doubtless informed you of what I am capable. Unfortunately, hair-dressing

dressing is not among the few talents I possess, if it is necessary to recommend me to your service."

"It is indeed unfortunate, for it is with me a very material object. But now I recollect Mosely told me you were an orphan, and had been bred a *gentlewoman*—consequently, I suppose, scarcely know how to do any thing. It is an unpardonable fault in parents," continued she, "to bring up their children in so ridiculous a manner, when they have no fortunes to bestow on them."

"The young woman, sister," interrupted Mrs. Stanhope, impatiently, "came to offer you her services, not to hear a dissertation on the follies of her parents."

"I beg your pardon," replied she, petulantly. Then turning to the stranger, she added—"Well, young woman, what is your name, and of what country are you?"

"My name, madam, is Marian Montgomery: I am of Scotland."

"I am

"I am sorry you are Scotch, for in general their pride is insufferable. I never knew one that did not boast a noble *fa—mi—ly*," drawling the last word.—"How far back can you trace your ancestors?"

"I have never been taught, madam, to value myself on either the antiquity or nobility of my ancestors," returned Marian; "I can only boast that neither their name nor actions reflect any dishonour on me."

"And that is saying a great deal," replied Mrs. Stanhope, ironically, "and far more than either my sister or self can boast; for our poor grandmother, in her sixtieth year, married her coachman; and my uncle, a peer of the realm, disgraced himself with his cookmaid."

"Madam," interrupted Mrs. St. Austyn, "what do you mean? I did not expect such treatment.—You may be gone now, child. Call again to-morrow; I will consider your business, and give you an answer."

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"It will be needless to trouble you, madam," replied Marian; "for I do not think that I possess the necessary qualifications to recommend me to your notice." With these words, dropping a curtsey, she quitted the apartment.

During the whole of this little dialogue the eyes of both Frederic and Berners had been rivetted on the stranger, and together with Gertrude, on her leaving the room, they had returned her salute.

"Mosely shall repent sending me such a pert baggage," said Mrs. St. Austyn: "I saw she was a proud haughty slut, the moment she entered."

"I never saw pride and haughtiness so pleasantly expressed on a countenance before," replied Mrs. Stanhope; "and I must say that your features, at this moment, far more strikingly express those passions; and as they are very disagreeable to me, I wish you a good morning, and when we meet in the afternoon, I hope to see you in a better humour."

"Nay,

"Nay, madam, before you go," replied Mrs. St. Austyn, "answer me one question. Do you hold it right or prudent to expose the follies of our family to such a wench, who will doubtless prate it, with every possible addition, to every chambermaid of her acquaintance?"

"I have never, since my earliest infancy," returned Mrs. Stanhope, "been mistress of my temper at the sight of oppression or insult, and therefore can only demand of you in return, whether you hold it excusable to treat with insolence an unoffending girl, who wished to look up to you for protection? Fie, fie, madam! Does fortune entitle its possessors to insult those it is their duty to protect? Alas! if the only superiority you possess over that girl be wealth, how poor your advantage! She has youth, beauty, and I will venture to affirm, by the various emotions of her expressive countenance while she listened to you, a susceptible heart—a heart that perhaps might have requited

requited your kindness, had you exerted it, by attaching itself to you with both affection and fidelity. As to my imprudence in mentioning the follies of my family, I plead guilty: your behaviour provoked the retort, as I thought it might silence you; and I hold it more praiseworthy to speak unpleasant truths of a dead king, than to give unmerited insult to a living beggar."

"Perhaps so, madam," replied Mrs. St. Austyn. "Your ideas were ever, I am sorry to say, beneath your rank in life, and unworthy your fortune."

"Very possibly," answered Mrs. Stanhope. "I have not, however, time at present to canvass the subject, as one of those derogatory ideas has just seized me; and can only observe to these gentlemen (turning to Frederic and Berners), that their continuing in the apartment, and increasing the poor girl's confusion by their presence, was a breach of politeness I did not expect from them." Then, ad-

dressing

dressing Mrs. St. Austyn, she added—"If you will spare Gertrude to take a ride with me, I shall regard it as a favour, as I wish to have her opinion on a purchase I am on the point of making."

Mrs. St. Austyn, though highly piqued with her sister, did not, however, choose to come to an open rupture; therefore immediately gave permission, leaving the apartment at the same time as Mrs. Stanhope and Gertrude.

CHAPTER VII.

The Advice of a Tutor—A Debt strangely incurred.

For some seconds after the departure of the ladies, both Frederic and Berners remained silent; at length the latter, laughing, said—"I think we all were sharers in the reproof, though Mrs. St. Austyn came in for the largest part."

"And justly," answered Frederic—"her behaviour was unpardonable. But what think you of that enchanting girl? Who but my mother could have treated her thus?"

"Not you,, I will be sworn," answered Berners: "therefore, as she wants a situation, suppose you engage her; she will make

make a very personable housekeeper for a single gentleman."

"For the first time, Berners," returned Frederic, "your humour is misplaced. How can you jest on such a girl? I protest I should approach her with as much reverence as a divinity."

"In which case she would treat you like a mere mortal. No, no, Frederic; those attacks might have done for your great grandmother, but the women now have more spirit."

"As for proper *spirit*, I am convinced that lovely girl possesses a sufficient quantity, though softened by the most bewitching modesty. Did you not remark her manner when she declined calling any more on my mother?"

"I did observe it, though perhaps I did not watch her quite so accurately as you; and as on your entrance into life a *chère amie* may be requisite, such a girl might be produced with credit to a man's taste."

"Why surely," returned Frederic, grave-

ly,

ly, "you do not think I would endeavour to seduce her?"

"Seduce her!" exclaimed Berners, in an agony of laughter; "is she not a woman, and made to be seduced? What sentimental novel have you been reading from mamma's collection? Cry your mercy, I believe she is old-fashioned enough to have Pamela and sir Charles Grandison among the group."

"Truce with your mirth," returned Frederic: "I confess the girl is formed to excite desire; but when I reflect that in all probability she is virtuous, I could as soon cut a throat as deprive her of that advantage."

"Ridiculous! Think you not some equivalent might be made for this wonderful *virtue*, and the girl think herself the obliged party? Believe me, Frederic, *your* far-fetched notions in this case are all a farce. You admire the girl merely as a connoisseur does a statue, or a jockey a horse,

horse, or those cold prudential ideas had never intruded."

"Indeed you are mistaken. She is so calculated to please, so apparently every thing my heart could wish, that, could an equivalent be made for the obligation, I should think myself fortunate in the acquisition."

"Then she must be obtained," returned Berners: "for my part, I have no doubts or scruples in the case. She is young, beautiful, and poor—you are handsome, lively, and generous; I therefore regard the business as easily settled; for all obstacles will yield to assiduity. Depend on my experience; there is no fortress so well defended as to be absolutely impregnable, and this is but a poor little hamlet, without any apparent means of defence."

"True," answered Frederic; "therefore the more dishonour would result from such a conquest."

Some young men with whom Frederic had

had become acquainted at that moment entering, the conversation ceased; but from the foregoing sketch it may be surmised, that the distinction of preceptor and pupil was lost in that of libertine companions, what was naturally good in the disposition of Frederic being destroyed by the principles Berners was perpetually inculcating.

Gertrude in the meantime had been more worthily engaged. Mrs. Stanhope, after a number of common observations as they rode along, asked her what she thought of the young person who had offered herself as her mother's attendant?

"Indeed, madam," replied Gertrude, warmly, "had it depended on me, I should instantly have engaged her; for I never saw a more interesting countenance in my life."

"Beauty alone, my dear Gertrude, is a very uncertain recommendation. But to convince you that you are not singular in this partiality, I must confess that I am equally

equally interested both with her manner and appearance; and as I want some person superior to a servant, who will bear with my particularities, and with whom I can rationally converse, I am resolved to question this young woman, and, if she suits me, engage her."

Gertrude had only time to declare her satisfaction at this intelligence before they stopped at the milliner's, where Mrs. Stanhope had ordered the carriage.

Mrs. Mosely being questioned respecting the person she had recommended to Mrs. St. Austyn, expressed her sorrow that she had not suited that lady, saying that she never knew a more amiable or deserving young woman; that *she* had frequently employed, and had always reason to be satisfied with her.

"What are her parents, or on whom does she now depend?" demanded Mrs. Stanhope.

"On herself alone," replied Mrs. Mosely. "Her only relation is a brother, unfortu-

nately

nately unable to assist her. But, with your permission, madam, I will call her; as you condescend to inquire, you have doubtless motives, and your questions will be best answered by herself."

Mrs. Stanhope bowed assent to the answer of Mrs. Mosely, which Mrs. St. Austyn would have deemed highly impertinent.—"I like the spirit of that woman," said she to Gertrude: "I think you want a new cloak; pray order one before we leave the shop."

Mrs. Mosely re-entered at that moment, introducing Marian, whose features visibly bore the marks of recent tears.

"As my sister's situation did not suit you, I come to offer you my own," said Mrs. Stanhope. "What are your terms? and what reference can you give?"

"My terms, madam," answered Marian, "shall be yours: I only request an asylum that may shield one of my age from reproach. For reference," added she, blushing, "I have none but the recommenda-

tion of Mrs. Mosely, who has known me some time."

"I will answer for her with my life," said the milliner, warmly.

"Enough," returned Mrs. Stanhope. "You have a brother, pray what is his profession?"

"My brother is of no profession, madam," replied Marian.

"I am sorry for it. I am a strange inquisitive woman; but if you live with me, you must bear with my infirmities. Pray how does he subsist?"

"My brother, madam," returned Marian, a pallid hue overspreading her cheek, and her eyes filling with tears—"my brother is a prisoner for debt in the King's Bench."

"A prisoner for debt!" repeated Mrs. Stanhope. "What family has he?"

"None, madam."

"Debts contracted by young men without incumbrance are seldom excusable: his might be a particular case."

"My

"My brother's, madam, does him honour; nor would I recall it even to liberate him, notwithstanding the inconvenience it has occasioned us."

"If not impertinently curious, may I ask the cause?"

"It was, madam," returned Marian, "to preserve the remains of an almost-idolized parent from the cruel gripe of the law. Alas!" continued she, tears streaming from her eyes, "though she was then incapable of feeling injury, could her children stand aloof and see her beloved remains denied the last receptacle of the wretched? My brother could not: he took the debt upon himself, consigned his mother to the grave, and himself to a prison."

"Pardon my curiosity," said Mrs. Stanhope, taking her hand; "it shall not hereafter distress you. I have given you a specimen of my oddities; think you, my good girl, that you can bear with them?"

There was a conciliatory kindness, both

in the voice and manner of Mrs. Stanhope, that at once struck in unison with the heart of Marian.—"Bear with them, madam!" repeated she. "Rather, can you bear the untaught though willing assiduities of a hapless girl, whose study, however she may fail, shall be to merit your approbation?"

"We will try each other," replied Mrs. Stanhope, smiling; "therefore prepare as soon as convenient, for I shall leave town speedily. At present, assist my niece in choosing a cloak; in the interim I wish to speak with Mrs. Mosely."

On their departure, Mrs. Mosely informed Mrs. Stanhope of the particulars of what Marian had advanced. The corpse of her mother had been seized for debt the day previous to that appointed for the funeral, but had almost immediately been redeemed by the piety of her son.—"And now, madam," continued Mrs. Mosely, "permit me to apologize for not in the first instance answering your questions. I well

well knew you would be more interested by Miss Montgomery herself, and ardently wished to gain her your protection."

Mrs. Mosely had added so many friendly recommendations of Marian, that on her re-entering the apartment with Gertrude, Mrs. Stanhope requested that she would dine that day with herself and niece—an invitation Marian respectfully accepted, first desiring leave to write a few lines to her brother.

CHAPTER VIII.

Generosity—A Spark of Virtue stifled.

If Mrs. Stanhope and Gertrude had been pleased with so transient a view of Marian, they were much more so during the day they passed together. Mrs. Stanhope had judged from the first she was the companion she could wish, and now found that she had no reason to retract that idea. Marian was highly accomplished, yet the most graceful simplicity marked her manners: her temper appeared lively, but the situation of her brother was a check on her natural disposition; and even while a smile dimpled her cheek, an involuntary sigh shook her bosom. She was timid, but the kindness of Mrs. Stanhope banished

nished restraint; and willing perhaps to shew that her condescension was not entirely misplaced, she called forth the talents she possessed to amuse her. She played with judgment and taste both on the pianoforte and harp, and, at the request of Gertrude, likewise sung; but the pieces of her own selection were all tinctured by the uneasy state of her mind, and her voice, though sweet as the flute's softest note, was plaintive as that of the nightingale.

As the party were taking tea, Mr. St. Austyn and Berners were announced. They had dined at a coffee-house, and being too soon for any of the places of amusement, merely to fill up the idle hour, had called at Mrs. Stanhope's. The astonishment of both at finding Marian so supported, may be better imagined than described; even Frederic's previous promise to Berners to pay a short visit was of no avail; the presence of Marian had already more influence than the rhetoric

 of

of the tutor, particularly as Mrs. Stanhope, who really loved her nephew, determined he should be no restraint, and set the example herself, by playing several pieces of music on the harpsichord; after which Marian relieved her, both with the same instrument and harp. Though the astonishment of Frederic had been great to find Marian with Mrs. Stanhope, yet a display of her accomplishments and manners, now that she appeared acting in her proper sphere (for her patroness paid her the most polite attention), yet more amazed him; for it was plain that the utmost pains had been taken with her education. Nor could even Berners any longer consider her as the *poor little hamlet without any means of defence*, who appeared to possess such abundant resources within herself.

Every sense engaged, it grew late; yet Frederic made no effort to take leave, until Mrs. Stanhope, with her usual freedom, addressing him, said—" Though at another

other time I should be much pleased with your visit, yet to-night you must excuse me, as I have business that, with me, must ever take place of pleasure."

Frederic, thus urged, with his friend Berners soon after took leave; after which Mrs. Stanhope, with Marian, accompanied Gertrude home; but did not leave her carriage until she reached Mrs. Mosely's, when, being alone with Marian, she said —"As I would wish you to consider me as your friend, you must expect me to speak freely. From the little I have heard, I know you labour under some pecuniary difficulties, and therefore insist that you accept your first year's stipend in advance. It may be useful; and if more be necessary——"

"Ah, madam!" replied Marian, perceiving Mrs. Stanhope had presented her a note of sixty pounds, "this is far more than my poor services can merit in a much longer period; and did not fatal necessity urge me, I would not accept it. As it is, I know

I know not how to refuse; for it will liberate my brother, whose freedom is the first and dearest object of my wishes."

"Be it so then," replied Mrs. Stanhope, charmed to find the money was to be applied as she designed it; "relieve your brother, and endeavour to recover your spirits; for I shall expect you to take up your residence with me as speedily as possible." To prevent Marian's thanks, she then hastily bade her good-night, saying she should expect to see her in the course of the ensuing day, if her avocations permitted.

In the mean time, Frederic and Berners had no sooner left Mrs. Stanhope, than the former exclaimed—"What say you now, Charles? Will you not retract all you have said derogatory to the sex? The beauty of this bewitching girl is her smallest attraction, and I could almost idolize Mrs. Stanhope for standing forth in the defence of so much merit."

"By the way," replied Berners, "if you

intend

intend to try your success, you have little reason to thank her—*her* interference may increase your difficulty and enhance the purchase: she is too cunning not to know her own value."

"Know her own value!" repeated Frederic—"doubtless she does; and by Heaven the man must possess more effrontery than falls to my share, who would dare to offer her less than his name, hand, and fortune. Nay, the mere possession of such a woman's person, beautiful as she is, would be inadequate to satisfy my wishes, could I not gain her invaluable heart."

"Gain her invaluable person, and her invaluable heart will follow of course," answered Berners. "But for marriage, and such a marriage, it would be effectual ruin on your entrance into life—a kind of civil death, which would prohibit, or at least circumscribe your future engagements; while, on the contrary, there can be no reasonable objection to a mistress, for she will preserve you from improper con-

nexions; while successful love, and the desire of pleasing a beautiful object, will inspire you with an emulation that will render you doubly interesting to the rest of the sex."

"Why certainly, if I could persuade her," answered Frederic, "to think as liberally as you or I do on some particular subjects, your plan would be a pleasurable one, unfettered with the clog of matrimony; but if I find the case desperate, I must even persuade her to wait till I am of age, and accept me on her own conditions."

"Any scheme you please—I am at your service, so that you steer clear of that antidote to love—*matrimony*. Your fortune, for a short time, is undoubtedly circumscribed; but on your future expectancies you may raise any sum you find necessary. Do so then; offer this angel a *douceur*, and for the present let us away to France. Think you not that she will prefer ease, affluence, and the assiduities of a

handsome

handsome young fellow, to attending the whimsicalities of an old woman?"

"I wish I may find it so," returned Frederic; "but I have not *face* enough to make the proposal."

"In this case," replied Berners, "I will be your messenger. To confess the truth, I fear you are too much in love to be trusted with an artful jade, who might profit by your folly. I know the world, Frederic, and have studied the sex, and have not the smallest doubt of your success, if she be properly applied to."

"You must lose no time then," said Frederic. "I plainly see she will become a great favourite with my aunt, who, I dare say, will take her as companion; in which case all pecuniary business will be a secondary consideration; for though Mrs. Stanhope is absolutely penurious in some things, in her generosity she knows no bounds."

It was then agreed that Berners should seek out a proper person to advance a considerable

siderable sum to Frederic, and that on the afternoon of the following day he should make the offer from his pupil to Marian. This arrangement made, they parted for the night.

For some time after Berners' departure, Frederic remained lost in thought; at length he said, mentally—"If she accept Berners' offer, it is plain I have mistaken her character—a discovery which, though it cannot extinguish my love, will at least decrease the esteem I feel for her. Happy Berners! he makes no such distinctions, but is content to gain the *woman*, without all those troublesome appendages I feel so necessary to my happiness. To me the mind of Marian is as dear as her person; and though perhaps I wish to banish that delicacy that might prevent her accepting my protection, yet I would willingly obtain her heart, and that my liberality might only be accepted as it came from a beloved object."

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

A modest Proposal.

MARIAN'S first care in the morning was to procure the liberty of her brother, whom she had hardly congratulated on his arrival, when Mrs. Mosely's maid informed her that a gentleman requested to see her on particular business. This visitor was no other than Berners, who had easily found her, by inquiring the address of Mrs. St. Austyn's milliner from her servant. Desiring him to be shewn into another apartment, she left her brother, and soon attended him. Her appearance for a moment staggered even the confident Berners; ease and dignity were blended in her whole person, while pleasure animated her

her naturally-expressive features, and gave a double lustre to her fine dark eyes. Her chesnut hair, unpowdered, and unconfined by fashion, fell in profuse ringlets down her back and over her graceful shoulders; nor did a plain black bombazeen gown fail to shew to advantage the fairness of her complexion.

"Pardon me, sir," said she, as she entered, addressing Berners, who, she had no doubt, came from Mrs. Stanhope, "I would have waited on you instantly, but the reception of a beloved brother, after a painful absence, rendered me almost regardless of every other object."

Berners, who had not before heard a brother mentioned, made a momentary pause; but soon recovering himself, he said—"The excuse is too amiable not to be at once admitted, and my business not so immediately pressing; though I confess it is to me interesting, as the happiness of a dear friend is concerned."

"You

"You came from Mrs. Stanhope, I presume?" demanded Marian.

"Not immediately, but from her near relation."

Marian, whose idea instantly presented Gertrude, returned warmly—"What are their commands? in what can I shew my gratitude? How should I exult in paying some interest for the debt I owe!"

Berners, who knew nothing of the obligation Marian alluded to, replied with more confusion than generally attended him—"You are under a trifling error; favours conferred on Miss Montgomery rather revert honour to the giver than to the receiver. My business was from Mr. St. Austyn, whom you saw last night at his aunt's."

"From Mr. St. Austyn!" returned Marian, somewhat surprised. "In what can I have the honour of obliging Mr. St. Austyn?"

"By conferring on him the highest of all favours. Charming Miss Montgomery! even

even a less interested person than myself would tell you at once that you were never formed for dependance. Affluence and command await you; Mr. St. Austyn entreats to lay himself and fortune at your feet."

"His humility, in that case, might perhaps surpass my patience," replied Marian, in some measure vanquishing her amazement, though affronted pride sparkled in her eyes, "and I might in my turn insult him; for I learn it is the mode to treat with disrespect those we consider under obligations."

"Pardon me," answered Berners, "neither disrespect nor insult can be intended; on tke contrary, Mr. St. Austyn, grieved to see you in a state so derogatory to your merit, wishes to place you in one more worthy your beauty and accomplishments."

"I am not accustomed," replied Marian, "to support discourses of this nature; but my beauty and accomplishments, as you are pleased to term them, are perfectly suited

suited to the situation in which Providence has placed me; nor do I ever find that situation irksome but when it subjects me to insolence."

"That word is too harsh, madam," said Berners; "nor does Mr. St. Austyn's conduct merit the appellation. He offers you his love, and an uncontrolled power over his fortune."

"He is much too generous for me," returned Marian; "I therefore beg leave to decline his kindness with all the *thanks it merits*, and can only express my concern that it has subjected a man of your appearance to so disagreeable and despicable an office."

A momentary flush of shame crossed Berners' cheek.—"It is the office of a friend, madam, and therefore cannot be derogatory——"

"It is the office of a *villain!*" Marian would have said; but suppressing the word, she added—"You broke in, sir, on a very

a very agreeable engagement, and I should be pleased to return to it."

"I cannot leave you thus," said Berners. "How can I carry back an answer that will plunge my friend in despair?"

"I insist on your absence," returned Marian, firmly, offering to leave the room.

Berners, vexed to be foiled thus, determined to make a bold stroke that would overcome all objections; therefore catching hold of her gown—"One word," said he, "and I have done. Consider before you utterly reject. Frederic St. Austyn is young and handsome; he offers you at present the command of his fortune, and a certainty of two hundred pounds yearly."

"His offers are indeed far superior to what I can expect," answered Marian, with cold contempt, "and much too great for me to reply to, especially as you are so peremptory; I must therefore, if you persist, consult my brother."

"Mr. St. Austyn's happiness must depend

pend on yourself," returned he, convinced the sum had shaken her first resolve.

"My happiness depends on my brother; and as you will take no denial, we will consult him." So saying, she raised her hand and pulled the bell.

Berners was too much surprised to reply; and a maid-servant almost immediately entering the apartment—"Tell Albert I request he would come to me," said she.

"What do you mean, madam?" demanded Berners.

"Only to discuss this point properly, that in future Mr. St. Austyn may know what he has to expect from me."

As she concluded, Albert Montgomery entered.

CHAPTER X.

Concise and Temperate.

ALBERT, on his entrance, moved his hat; but Marian waved all ceremony, by saying—"My dear brother, this gentleman, concerned for the declining state of our affairs, has brought me an offer from his friend, Mr. St. Austyn, of sharing his fortune for the present, and a future certainty of two hundred pounds yearly. That, I believe, sir, was the purport of your embassy—was it not?" added she, referring to Berners, who was too much confused to reply immediately; for there was an expression on Marian's features that boded his mission no success, and on those of her brother, anger and contempt in their most

legible

legible characters; the latter, however, appeared predominant; for, surveying Berners from head to foot with ineffable disdain, playing at the same time with a small cane which he held in his hand, he said—"You will give me leave, sir, to see you to the door; and if you value your safety, take my advice—do not repeat your visit."

To a temper like that of Berners no treatment was half so galling as contempt, and almost bursting with rage, he answered—"I will not be insulted with impunity."

"Insulted!" repeated Albert, with marked irony—"that, sir, is surely impossible to a *gentleman* of your *honourable profession.* I wish you a good-day," added he, opening the room door and still waving the little cane.

"You shall hear from me, sir," answered Berners, almost inarticulate with rage, as he advanced towards the staircase.

"I do not desire it," returned Albert.

Berners

Berners could scarcely refrain turning on Albert, and taking what he termed satisfaction; but, in the first place, he recollected he was unarmed; again, that though Albert was not so handsome a fellow as himself, he had a far more commanding and manly appearance; lastly, the consciousness of the despicable light in which he appeared, gave his high spirit a check that it was unaccustomed to feel, and gnashing his teeth, a vehement execration escaped him as he quitted the house, Albert having followed him to the street-door, but suffered him to open it himself.

Albert returned immediately to Marian, who, though her spirits had supported her in the presence of Berners, yet now felt all the terrors that sisterly affection could inspire.—"My beloved brother," said she, "though I have given a proof how far I trusted to the forbearance of your temper, yet I tremble lest that villain should force you into a contest in which I might lose the

the only friend that Heaven has left me, or that friend become a murderer."

"Neither," returned Albert, wiping away a tear that hung on her cheek; "I hold my life of too much value to place it in competition with that of such a scoundrel; for it may be serviceable to thee, my Marian."

"Promise me then, should he challenge you, that you will not meet him."

"I will not in the manner you mean," returned Albert; "but it would not become your brother to avoid him; however, you may safely trust me, for my contempt surpasses my anger. One circumstance gives me far more uneasiness: after what has passed, I cannot think of your going to Mrs. Stanhope, and I had flattered myself that would have been for you a safe asylum; the money too which she advanced I am unable to repay, which gives me real concern."

"On my word," answered Marian, "Mrs. Stanhope, I am certain, would be

the first to discourage her nephew's libertinism, were she informed of it; and I am convinced that I shall be more secure under her roof than any where else."

"You mentioned Mr. St. Austyn to me this morning as a handsome and accomplished young man; and can you, my love, answer for your own heart? It may not be a very improbable surmise, that time and assiduity might interest you in his favour; and though I can truly assure you that I have no doubt of your prudence, I may yet entertain fears for your happiness."

"Had you not palliated your speech, my dear Albert, by the word *prudence*, I should have been half angry. I readily allow," added she, with a smile, "the possibility of being pleased with Mr. St. Austyn; but, according to my idea, a little esteem is necessary to qualify love, and you cannot suppose I have any of that ingredient for a man who could so grossly insult me."

"The

"The poor are easily wounded," returned Albert, "and a double portion of caution is necessary to them. Honour, my sister, is all we have left; and I would sooner die than hear yours tarnished with slander. Mrs. Stanhope's character, as Mrs. Mosely gave it me last night, is unexceptionable; but I must yet inquire farther."

"Your doubts will vanish when you have seen and conversed with her," replied Marian; "and I can truly say, that, even on this short acquaintance, I esteem her beyond any woman I ever knew, my mother excepted."

"Would to God," said Albert, "I was situated in a manner to render all other protection unnecessary!"

At that moment Mrs. Mosely's maid informed them Mrs. Stanhope was in the parlour.

"Shall I, my dear brother, mention what has passed respecting Mr. St. Austyn?" said Marian.

"Not now. Go down and ask if I may

not have permission to return my thanks for the favours conferred on us?"

When Marian entered the parlour, she found Mrs. Stanhope alone.—"I am come," said that lady, "to inquire whether your brother's business is settled? if not, I will call on my solicitor and employ him. I am sorry that measure was not at once adopted."

"My brother," returned Marian, "has been liberated some hours, and is now in the house. Ah, madam! you know not how happy you have made me, nor what a weight of anguish you have removed from my bosom."

"Well, and may I not see this beloved brother?"

Marian immediately informed her of his request, and in a few minutes introduced him.

Marian had said all his doubts would vanish when he saw Mrs. Stanhope; and, to speak truly, they greatly decreased. He found her manners simple and bene-

volent;

volent; and though he expressed his thanks without meanness, she accepted them with reluctance.—"Truce with the subject," said she, "no thanks are due to me—the debt, if any, is to your sister, and I desire to hear it no more mentioned. I shall be at home all the evening, and shall expect to see you both as early as convenient."

This invitation was accepted with pleasure, and Mrs. Stanhope soon after bade them farewell.

"Now what think you of my new friend?" demanded Marian, exultingly.

"Why I think, my dear sister, that if an informed countenance and benevolent manners are indications of a good heart, Mrs. Stanhope certainly possesses one."

"For once then," replied she, "you do justice to my discernment. You have now only to know my other favourite, Miss St. Austyn, who to a lovely person joins apparently a good understanding and disposition."

Soon after, the brother and sister separated, Albert having informed her that he had some business to transact previous to their intended visit.

CHAPTER XI.

Anger—an unwelcome Visitor—and good Advice.

BERNERS, stung with the contemptuous manner in which he had been treated by Albert, vowing revenge, hastened to Frederic, and, throwing himself into a chair, uttered an unconnected string of threats and mingled execrations.

"What is the matter?" said Frederic; "why are you thus moved? I knew it was impossible you should be successful, and have only to lament that the attempt will

will be the destruction of my hopes.' Regain your temper, and at least confess that you have met one virtuous woman."

"One virtuous woman!" repeated Berners—"an artful jilt—a vixen, who keeps her bully within call. But by Heaven I will have satisfaction for the insult I have received! Nothing short of his life shall expiate the affront."

"Whose life? You are incomprehensible. I entreat you, calm your agitation, and, if possible, explain."

It was some time, however, before Berners could sufficiently conquer his passion to enter into any detail, which when he did, he briefly related the behaviour both of Albert and Marian.

Frederic had not before heard that Marian had a brother, nor could he avoid in his heart applauding his conduct. Though vexed at his friend's humiliation, he felt it was deserved, and shrunk at the retrospection; but considering himself as the cause, he replied—"No, Berners, the in-

sult is meant for me, and I insist that to me you leave the means of redress."

"By Heaven!" returned Berners, "that man does not live with whom I would trust my revenge in such a cause! I will immediately write to him, and insist on a meeting. If you will accompany me, I shall regard it as a favour."

"Most assuredly. But is there no palliative? Indeed, Berners, I am sincerely sorry that I should have occasioned such a step to be necessary, and would risk any thing to prevent it."

More discourse passed on the subject; but Berners was deaf to all he could urge towards an accommodation, and, declining the company of Frederic for an hour or two, declared he would take a walk, and endeavour to regain his temper.

Frederic's thoughts when alone were not of the most pleasing kind; he walked hastily about the room, overpowered by the different ideas that distracted him; he felt Marian was dearer to his heart from

the

the late repulse, and almost, in spite of the resentment he entertained on account of Berners, admired her brother. He concluded the whole would be divulged to his mother and Mrs. Stanhope. For the former he cared little, but he dreaded the severity of the latter, who, he readily surmised, would take the part of the injured, and in consequence forbid his visits.

This unpleasant reverie was at length broken by his servant informing him that a gentleman desired particularly to see him.

"Has he no name?" replied Frederic, impatiently—"But it is immaterial—I will admit no company."

"The gentleman, sir," answered the footman, "said he was a stranger, but that he had very particular business."

"I care not. Tell him I am out—busy—or what you please."

"I have already told him you were at home, sir, as I had received no orders to the contrary."

Frederic uttered a peevish exclamation, and desired him to be admitted.

On the entrance of the stranger, Frederic, finding him totally unknown, coolly desired to be informed of his name and business.

"My name, sir," returned he, without moving his hat, "is Albert Montgomery; my business, I presume, you are therefore acquainted with—though, to confess the truth, I could hope the contrary, as I cannot forget that I unhappily owe some obligations to your family."

Frederic was no coward, yet shrunk at the name, and for a moment hesitated whether he should not deny the whole transaction; but, too generous to throw the blame on his friend, and in some measure pleased to anticipate his revenge, he replied—"As to obligation, sir, I know of none. If you allude to Mrs. Stanhope, I am not impertinent enough to pry into her private actions, which I sincerely believe do her honour. *I* have offended

you,

you, and am ready to give what satisfaction you require, and will accompany you where you please instantly."

"There is no haste," returned Albert; "circumstances where life or honour is concerned should be deliberated with care: had you taken that precaution, you would not perhaps have insulted a defenceless girl, whose only portion is virtue. It is true, she was under obligations to your family; your aunt had rescued her brother from prison, and promised her future protection. But those circumstances, to a generous mind, would rather have acted as a restraint than an incentive. To recompence this injury, you offer to give me *satisfaction*, according to the mode of modern honour—in which, should you fall, I must be stigmatized with ingratitude for killing my benefactor's nephew; for the world are unacquainted with the provocation. On the contrary, should fortune be on your side, I leave my sister

 unprotected,

unprotected, and open to the insolence of every libertine."

"What satisfaction can I make?" interrupted Frederic, warmly. "I feel my error, and am not above confessing it; but for any favours you may have received from Mrs. Stanhope, I declare upon my honour I am totally unacquainted with them."

"I will not dispute the attestation," returned Albert, "and only request that you will give me the same pledge to pursue my sister Marian no farther; in which case what has passed shall be buried in oblivion."

Frederic sighed, and remained silent.

"That promise shall suffice," continued Albert: "of the prudence of Marian I have no doubt, but her peace must be secured from insult."

"There was no insult meant from me to Miss Montgomery," returned Frederic; "and I now protest to you, that some peculiar

culiar circumstances alone prevented me from offering her terms which neither she nor you need blush to have received."

"Is it possible that so infamous an offer can be made without insult to a virtuous woman, however humble her situation?" answered Albert. "There may also be peculiar reasons on her side, that would have prevented her accepting those terms which you say she need not have blushed to receive."

"Perhaps," replied Frederic, a sentiment of jealousy quickening his voice, "she is engaged. The name of brother is sometimes convenient."

"I came here, Mr. St. Austyn," answered Albert, with a mixture of haughtiness and contempt, "determined to be calm; my resolution therefore shall not be shaken. You are a young man—so am I; but our education I suppose has been different. Both example and adversity have aided in teaching me to subdue my

my passions. Perhaps you have experienced the advantages of neither; for it certainly is an advantage to be able to restrain desires, which, if not withheld within the bounds of reason, level us with brutes. Marian *is* my sister, and, though reduced to seek a dependance, might yet be able to refuse any offers in the power of Mr. St. Austyn to make."

Frederic felt hurt, yet somewhat relieved by hearing Marian was *really* his sister, replied—"Miss Montgomery would have sustained no disgrace by the proffer of my hand, and which family reasons alone prevented my offering."

"Undoubtedly none," answered Albert; "but were there no other cause for her rejection, those family reasons would have their full force; for, though reduced, I can truly assure you that my sister should not contract an alliance with a prince, whose whole family were not proud to acknowledge her."

"Miss

"Miss Montgomery at least," said Frederic, somewhat piqued, "has an independent will."

"I am convinced that you will find our thoughts on this subject perfectly similar," replied Albert. "But I know not how we have strayed from the request I made, that you would relinquish all thoughts of Marian. I expect this concession, and do not doubt but that you will make it."

Frederic, pleased in spite of himself with Albert, answered—"If possible, excuse what has passed, and I give you my promise in the most sacred manner never to seek to gain your sister but on the most honourable terms—I mean, as my wife; let what will be the event, I will extend my word no farther."

"So far then I thank you," answered Albert, "though I should have been more satisfied with a fuller promise; yet think myself bound in honour to warn you that every attempt will be fruitless. Marian will have no concealments from Mrs. Stanhope,

hope, if she reside with her, except the offer made her this day, and that I am convinced she will, if possible, not humiliate herself by revealing."

Frederic, pleased by this avowal, replied—"I thank you—the humiliation would be only mine: and now, could I get over one disagreeable circumstance, I should be much relieved. The gentleman who called on your sister was, I take shame to myself, employed by me, and is my dearest friend. My errand, I confess, deserved contempt; but let it fall where due—on myself. He, I understand, has been grossly insulted, and insists on satisfaction; and though I know not how to ask it, yet I could wish some little concession, that might put a stop to all further animosity."

"Never from me," answered Albert, haughtily. "I am sorry so young a man has fallen into such bad hands. Would I had power or rhetoric to snatch you from them, or rather to persuade you from approaching

proaching too near the vortex, which will inevitably overwhelm you!—But I have intruded too long on your time, and wish you a good-day." Thus speaking, Albert moved his hat, and quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

A new Prescription for intemperate Minds.

ALBERT hastened home to his sister, whom in part he informed of what had passed, desiring her cautiously to avoid Mr. St. Austyn, and if in future he made her offers of any kind, to disclose them immediately to Mrs. Stanhope. The discourse then turned on the intended visit, but was interrupted by Mrs. Mosely, who informed them that a man waited below with

with a letter that he said required an immediate answer.

Albert went down, and addressing him, asked from whom he came?

"From Mr. Berners, sir," said he.

"I do not know the gentleman," returned Albert. "Perhaps you have mistaken?"

"Your name is Montgomery, ar'nt it, sir?" asked the man.

"It is."

"Then, sir, the letter is for you. My master, I think, said that he had been here this morning, or something of that sort."

"You are right, I fancy," returned Albert. "But take back the letter; this answer only is necessary—I hold no correspondence with the writer."

"I dare not take back such a message, sir, my master will be so angry; for he is a very fiery gentleman."

"I am sorry for it, my good fellow," returned Albert; "but I am no physician, and cannot therefore prescribe for those

fiery

fiery maladies; but I should think *abstinence, bleeding*, and *physic*, might be efficacious."

"You are an odd gentleman," said the man, "and, I'll be bound, main good-humoured. But indeed you must take the letter."

"I will not. Good-day to you, friend." So saying, he left him, and returned to his sister.

Marian, though she had the strongest dependence on the forbearance and morals of her brother, could hardly support herself during this short absence; she judged truly that the letter came from her morning visitor, and dreaded lest her brother should at length be exasperated sufficiently to meet him.—"My dear Albert," said she, "forgive my fears: may I not know the purport of that letter?"

"I know it not myself," answered he —"I returned it unopened. Your fears, my love, distress me. Have I not promised,

mised, and did you ever know me prone to falsify my word?"

"No, surely," replied Marian, attempting to smile; "but my wealth is now small, and can bear no diminution. But it grows late—it is time to prepare for our visit."

Berners, on leaving Frederic, had immediately repaired to the coffee-house, from whence he had written a challenge to Albert, after which he had returned somewhat more composed to his pupil; but his vexation recurred with redoubled force, when informed of the accommodation that had taken place between them, answering, when Frederic concluded his relation—"It is well, sir: then I may seek a second elsewhere, for I cannot now expect you to accompany me."

"You injure me by the supposition," returned Frederic. "The quarrel is mine, and willingly would I that the whole should revert on my own head."

At

At that moment the man who had taken the letter to Albert entered; for, not finding his master at the coffee-house, he had returned to Mrs. St. Austyn's.

"Give me the answer quickly," said Berners, impatiently, holding out his hand to receive it.

"There is no answer, sir," returned the man; "the gentleman, do what I could, would not take the letter, for he said *as how* he wanted no correspondence with you."

"Rascal! idiot! did I not tell you it was of consequence, and required an immediate answer?"

"Why I told him so, sir; but it did not argufy, he only turned it like into a joke. I did all I could, I am sure; for I told him how angry you would be—and even took the liberty to say you was of a very fiery temper."

Berners gnashed his teeth.

"But all the answer he made," continued the man, "was as how he was no doctor;

doctor; but that if you took some *abstinence*, I think that was the name, and was bleeded and physicked, he thought it *mought* do you good."

Berners could bear no more, and, for want of another object, flew on the poor fellow, who, had he not been rescued by Frederic, would have paid dear for Albert's temerity.

His rage now surpassed all bounds, until, exhausted by his own violence, he was necessitated to withdraw to his apartment, Frederic accompanying him until he retired to rest, unable longer to sustain the conflict of his spirits.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

Albert proves himself not a Man of Spirit.

It was not more than nine o'clock when Frederic quitted Berners, much discomposed himself in mind, and undetermined how to dispose of the rest of the evening, yet wishing, if possible, to avoid the pangs of reflection.

By Albert's discourse he learned that Mrs. Stanhope was unacquainted with the late manœuvre; therefore, after some doubts and hesitation, he determined to call there, though at the same time *almost* hoping that he might not find Marian of the party.

On his entrance, Mrs. Stanhope and Gertrude, with Albert and his sister, were seated

seated in social conversation. His confusion was strong, and sufficiently visible to those informed of the late transaction, but overlooked by Mrs. Stanhope and Gertrude; the former of whom, having no idea that the gentlemen had ever met before, said—"I am happy you are come, Frederic; I wish you to be acquainted with Mr. Montgomery; you will likewise assist at a consultation I was on the point of commencing."

Frederic bowed, as did also Albert, though coldly, while Marian changed alternately from red to pale, and trembled universally; but, to conceal her emotion, pretended to be carefully looking over a piece of music. At length, in some measure recovering from her confusion, she ventured to raise her eyes, which met those of Frederic, whose face instantaneously became tinged of the same crimson complexion.

Calmness being in some measure restored by the musical powers of Marian, who

who had played at the request of Gertrude, Mrs. Stanhope again revived the discourse which had been broken off by the entrance of Frederic.—"My nephew and niece," said she, turning to Albert and Marian, "I would have you henceforth consider as friends. I will therefore openly, Mr. Montgomery, ask you your future destination; and if my little services and interest can be instrumental towards your advantage, command them freely."

Albert bowed.—"My obligations, madam," replied he, "will scarcely admit of increase. Before my confinement, my wish was to find employment in some mercantile house: I think I possess qualifications for a situation of that kind, as I can support a correspondence in three or four different languages."

Frederic, who, in despite of all the affronts Berners had received, longed to do something that might reinstate him in the opinion of Marian, and well knowing that

 his

his aunt in her benevolence heeded no expence, replied, addressing her—"As you, madam, have done me the honour of discussing this subject while I am present, I should think the army better suited to Mr. Montgomery's youth and appearance than commerce."

"Appearances are not always to be trusted," replied Albert. "I am not partial to the army."

"May we ask the reason?" said Mrs. Stanhope.

"In the first place," returned he, "I do not think I possess the disposition necessary to give proper ardour to a soldier; for my contests must ever seek me—I shall never quit my country to seek them. If an enemy attack us at home, I hope I shall furnish my quota of courage to repel the intruder, but am convinced the laurel of triumph was never meant to grace my brow."

"Perhaps you would prefer the navy?" said Mrs. Stanhope.

Albert sighed.—"My father," said he, "was a lieutenant in that service. I honour the navy—it is the bulwark of our country; but I am not, I confess, of a disposition to take an active part in the bustle of life, unless compelled by necessity. Commerce is therefore the most suited to my inclination, and what I would willingly choose."

Albert sunk considerably, on this declaration, in the opinion of Frederic; and Gertrude, who had before thought him, though not handsome, very agreeable, now regarded him as a poltroon; for her favourite heroes were all valiant fighting men, and *impossible* to be vanquished.

On the contrary, the choice pleased Mrs. Stanhope, who declared she had no doubt of placing him to his wishes. The discourse then reverted to various opinions on the subject that had been started, until at length a conversation on the difference of country and climate took place.

"I hold it possible to make every situation

tion pleasant, so we possess the company of those we love, and are supplied with the means of existence," said Albert. "I speak this feelingly, for the spot in which I have hitherto enjoyed the greatest happiness, was in the most wild and desolate part of Strathnavern, in the Highlands of Scotland, where we passed the summers in mirth, ease, and alternate labour, and beguiled the long winters in varied amusements and social converse, regardless of the keen northern blast, while the glow of affection warmed our hearts, and peace and content spread their cheering influence around us."

Mrs. Stanhope sighed.—"Miss Montgomery," said she, "if I understand aright, is a native of that country?"

"We were both born there, madam," replied Albert. "A most unhappy event occasioned us to leave it: were it not intruding on your patience, I would relate it to you."

"On the contrary," returned Mrs.

Stanhope,

Stanhope, "it will give me peculiar pleasure."

Albert bowed, and obeyed.

CHAPTER XIV.

Montgomery's Story.

"I HAVE already informed you, madam," said Albert, "that my father was a lieutenant in the navy; but before he attained that distinction, he had the—I cannot call it misfortune, its consequences were for many years so happy—to become enamoured of an Irish lady, but whose relations, a father and brother, were so averse to the match, that at length it was concluded without their permission. For some years he continued in the service, and had obtained a lieutenancy, when he

received a wound in the right arm that disabled him, and caused him to retire on half-pay to a little estate (not more than forty pounds yearly value), near Melness, in Strathnavern. Here Marian and myself were born, and our education became a new source of employment, or rather amusement, to our parents; for both were accomplished, my father having entered the service only in his twentieth year, previous to which he had enjoyed all the advantages that education and travel could bestow, in company with an elder brother.

"Our situation was retired; we had few neighbours, and those not calculated for social acquaintance; our amusements and recreations therefore depended greatly on ourselves; yet I can truly declare that I never found the time tedious; the lessons of my father, who had a well-chosen but small library, to which were added the instructions of my mother, who was a proficient in music, made the days pass insensibly; nor did the most flattering picture

my

my youthful fancy could form, present a situation for which I would have exchanged it. In the summer our avocations were more varied, for they had the addition of farming and gardening, we by dint of care and labour forcing our ungenial soil to repay our pains.

"Thus happy in ourselves, and envying no one's greatness, all was domestic pleasure, until I attained my twenty-first and Marian her seventeenth year, when she began to grow mischievous."

"Mischievous!" repeated Mrs. Stanhope, smiling.

"Yes, madam," resumed Albert, "mischievous; for what else can it be termed, to fascinate a man of near fifty to so great a degree, that he offered himself as husband to a girl of scarcely seventeen, who laughed at the damage she had done, and refused to heal the wound she had made? He was a laird too—had a respectable estate adjoining ours—and, to complete all, was a rigid Presbyterian. But his

offers were vain; the foolish girl had neither gratitude, pride, nor religion, sufficient to induce her to accept him—a piece of obstinacy that my father and mother, contrary to the custom of prudent parents in lucrative offers, were strange enough to support her in—and the lover was in consequence dismissed with a polite refusal.

"From this time the laird of Carnagie was our inveterate enemy, and, in spite of the humility of religion, took no little pains to shew us the difference between a rich laird and a poor lieutenant; and particularly one day, my father being riding down a narrow lane, which was merely a horse-road, he happened to overtake the laird, who was going a good round trot, but purposely gave his horse a check, in order to keep my father behind; for the lane was too narrow for him to pass without danger, and the contraction left in his arm made any exertion painful, or he was not of a disposition to bear insult calmly.

Not

Not inclined to ride near two miles in this manner, my father returned home; and as it was necessary that the business on which he was going when he overtook the laird should be settled, I asked leave to transact it the next day myself.

"I had hardly entered the lane, when, to my wishes, at a short distance before me I perceived the laird, for it was the nearest road to his house; but turning and seeing who was behind, he retarded his speed, as he had done the day before. —'Be so obliging as to draw on one side and let me pass, for I am in haste,' said I. —'Then e'en stay till your haste is over,' replied the laird; 'or if you dinna choose that, gang round by the high road? I winna draw aside for boys. Ye are in your proper place, for aught I see.'

"I made no answer, but, giving my horse the spur, passed the good laird at the expence of a pretty strong jostle, which drove him against the opposite bank; then, suddenly checking my beast,

 took

took the same sober pace he had before adopted, using his own words—‘Ye are in your proper place, for aught I see.’

“This affront redoubled his former rancour; he sought every opportunity to harass and vex us; but his affronts, as before, frequently recoiled on himself, until one Sunday evening, on passing our house, he heard music and singing; for we frequently formed a little concert among ourselves. He immediately fetched the minister to witness this horrible profanation of the Sabbath, in which myself and Marian were singing *lascivious, loose* songs, and our still wickeder parents encouraging us by playing wanton, profane tunes.

“I must here observe, we were singing Shenstone's beautiful pastoral of, *My banks they are furnished with bees*, my mother accompanying with the pianoforte, and my father with his flute.

“For this dreadful crime we were cited before the elders of the kirk, where, as we openly confessed our guilt, we were ordered

dered to make a public acknowledgment before the congregation the ensuing Sabbath, under pain of excommunication. This order my father laughed at, and we were cut off from the body of the church, denounced by the minister, and in consequence, as he said, *cursed of God*. This event, however, gave us little sorrow. My father ever after, to shew us the reverence in which he held the sacred duties, performed them with unexampled devotion at home.—'My dear children,' said he, 'public prayers are necessary, because they inspire more general reverence to the Deity; but, according to my idea, the most acceptable to God must be those which spring spontaneously from the heart, and which, concealed from the public eye, are dictated in no set terms, but with humility and contrition retrace our errors, and entreat assistance towards future amendment.'

"The winter after our denunciation was uncommonly severe, and my father was

seized with the rheumatism, which increased to so dreadful a height, that he was advised to try the hot wells at Bristol as the only resource. This journey was extremely inconvenient, on account of our circumstances; but as we had a little fund of eight hundred pounds in a Scottish bank, it was at length agreed that two hundred of that should be drawn to supply the present exigency, and the house and land let during our absence. But the second part of this resolution was vain; no one would hire the land of an excommunicated person, particularly as they had witnessed the dreadful effect of the minister's denunciation—for such the rheumatism was denominated. We therefore shut up our house, left the key and power of letting it with a surgeon, named Home, at Melness, and set off for Bristol, which we reached by easy journeys.

"For three months there was little alteration in my father's health: at that period his malady increased alarmingly, and, weary

weary of residing in an expensive bathing-place, he insisted on removing to London, as he was unequal to so long a journey as returning home; added to which, the physician advised a longer continuation in a milder air. We accordingly came to London, and hired a small house in the suburbs, where my father, after six months continued suffering, closed a life of unblemished rectitude.

"This blow fell heavy on us all, but most particularly on my mother, whose grief was of that deep but silent kind which is sure to undermine the constitution; she declined all business, and appeared in no haste to return home; indeed, my father's illness, travelling expenees, physicians' fees, funeral and domestic expences, had totally reduced our purse, and I found it necessary to write for a supply, determined to settle my mother and sister at home, and to take an active part in life, that might enable me in some measure to assist them.

"This

"This resolve was, however, rendered fruitless; for before I received an answer to my letter, I learned from the public prints, that the bank in which our little all was deposited had suddenly stopped payment. Though almost distracted with this news, I carefully concealed it from my mother, whose declining health made this precaution necessary; and I have the satisfaction of contemplating, that she died without the additional pang of knowing she left us destitute. Her illness was long, and consequently involved us, as we had no resource, in difficulties, all of which I made shift to discharge by the sale of our little superfluities, but an arrear of thirty pounds due for rent, and for which, being contracted since, my father's death, the landlord arrested the body of my mother.

"To relate what followed would be only recalling painful sensations; suffice it, our excellent parent was laid by her faithful partner—Marian placed in the house of Mrs. Mosely, of whom I had an excellent

excellent character—and myself taken to the situation from which your generosity redeemed me," concluded Albert, bowing to Mrs. Stanhope.

"Mrs. Mosely is truly worthy the character you heard of her," said Marian; "and I must do her the justice to declare, that though my poor endeavours were a very small acknowledgment for the trouble I was to her, yet it was with the utmost difficulty she would consent to my leaving her."

"But your house in Strathnavern, is that yet let?" said Mrs. Stanhope.

"No, madam; but I should not have omitted informing you that it is entailed —I cannot therefore dispose of it; and as for the furniture, though Marian has frequently pressed it, I have hitherto declined it; for, in the first place, though of no great value, there is scarcely a particle that I do not almost hold sacred; and in the next, in case of the worst, it will always afford her an asylum. To confess the truth, I believe

believe it is as estimable to her as to myself, and that nothing but liberating me could have given rise to such an idea. I had also another reason to strengthen my refusal. The bank in which our small fortune was placed will be able in a few months, I have learned from respectable authority, to re-establish its credit; when I meant not only to have discharged the debt, but allowed interest for the money—which, as my creditor is rich, would equally have answered his purpose as if he had been immediately paid."

Mrs. Stanhope made no comment on Albert's story, yet was much pleased with the frankness of his relation; and Albert, with Marian, soon after left the party, the latter being to take up her residence entirely with Mrs. Stanhope on the ensuing day.

Gertrude returned home in Mrs. Stanhope's carriage, accompanied by her brother; which point being favourable to her wishes, she said—"What is the reason, my

my dear Frederic, I so seldom see you? I know not when before I have met with you alone; Mr. Berners and you are perpetually engaged."

Frederic pleaded some particular business of which he did not wish his mother informed. This, though it in some measure excused him, was by no means satisfactory in respect to Berners, who, unlike every lover she had read of, neither privately slid a letter into her hand, bribed her maid to give her one, nor yet sought an opportunity to see her.

Frederic, after wishing her a good-night, called in Berners' apartment, who, though somewhat recovered from his paroxysm of passion, still vowed revenge, declaring that neither the temper nor cowardice of Albert should save him, as he was determined to affront him publicly, and, if he would not fight, to kick him.

Frederic's reply was conciliatory; kicking Albert did not appear to him quite so easy a task. His answer, however, served only

only to increase the acrimony of Berners, until the youth, who began to feel the humiliation of acting in concert with a bad man, declared, that as the quarrel was entirely incurred on his account, whatever were his resolves, he should think himself bound in honour to second them.

Frederic then retired to his own apartment, depressed in mind and humiliated in his own eyes. There was something in Albert's behaviour that demanded his esteem, and which he would have been happy to offer, had not his friendship to Berners prevented it, and obliged him to decline all intercourse with a man on whom he felt his happiness must greatly depend, for he could not resolve to relinquish Marian.

CHAPTER XV.

A Lover disgraced in the Presence of his Mistress.

Berners had, as before observed, applied to a Jew broker, who, after a number of preliminaries to secure himself from the law, agreed to advance the sum of five thousand pounds at *lawful interest*, on a bond for six thousand, payable when Frederic should complete his twenty-first year.

These terms staggered even the youth and unguarded temper of Frederic; but Berners so strongly represented the necessity, that he speedily consented, and the bond was filled up and the money advanced.

Residing

Residing at his mother's now, for the first time, began to appear a restraint on Frederic, though it had long been irksome to Berners, as he was at least obliged to observe early hours. Had Frederic been alone, this inconvenience had perhaps never been felt; yet, in company with Berners, there was usually some pleasurable pursuit, and he never failed to incur a laugh of ridicule at his fears of offending his mother or aunt. It was therefore, after some consideration, settled between them, that Frederic should pretend a dislike to sleeping in the bustle of London, and take a lodging at a short distance. Berners had yet another motive—he almost despaired of Frederic's success with Marian, and had no doubt but that, if he had opportunity to lead him into the dissipation of the town, she would soon be forgotten.

Frederic immediately informed his mother of the agreed arrangement; and as that lady was not gifted with much reflection or prudence, she readily gave cre-

dit

dit to what was advanced, and particularly as no demand was made for a larger allowance. Another reason perhaps for her acquiescence was, that, even yet a slave to vanity and love of admiration, a grown son, who was a perpetual spy on her actions, was by no means desirable, and the time was now arrived when she could appear in the world with eclat.

This point settled, Berners was not long in finding apartments, which he engaged at Knightsbridge, in the house of a widow, whose whole support depended on those slender means. Thus suited, the young gentlemen lost no time in taking possession of their new habitation—Mrs. Stanhope, and even Gertrude, being ignorant of the alteration until the ensuing day.

Frederic and Berners were so elated with the possession of so large a sum, that for a short time it almost overpowered every other consideration; with Berners particularly the tide of pleasure and unrestrained gratification totally obliterated all

thoughts

thoughts of Gertrude, and even protracted the desire of vengeance against Albert. Frederic, resolved to banish the thought of Marian, gave equally into libertinism; being uncontrolled master of his actions was new and flattering to his youth; but, vicious rather from example and precept than constitution and inclination, his errors wanted the zest that redoubled those of Berners; and, surrounded by all the luxuries of the table, his spirits inflamed with wine and intoxicated with all the fascinating allurements that can be purchased from the unhappy votaries of shame, his heart at some moments recoiled, and the simple graces of Marian stole on his mind, disgusted him with riot, and made him sigh for calmer pleasures. Berners was, on the contrary, constitutionally a libertine, and had neither morals nor religion sufficient to endeavour to restrain his passions: at college he had given into every debauchery which his father's contracted income could purchase,

and

and had considerably involved him in debt; yet he was still a stranger to the sharping arts of the gamblers of the metropolis, who, seeing two young men, apparently possessed of large fortunes, rushing into every species of expence and riot, determined to come in for their share of the prey; and finding Berners more easy of access than Frederic, spared no pains to commence an acquaintance, which was effected without difficulty.

Marian in the interim had taken up her residence with Mrs. Stanhope, and made daily progress in her esteem; her serious hours had now an agreeable, conversable friend, and her cheerful ones a rational companion, whose lively temper made them pass insensibly. The removal of Frederic, and at an early age left almost to himself, gave Mrs. Stanhope considerable uneasiness, and with her usual freedom she remonstrated to her sister; but she merely replied, that five hundred pounds yearly was surely a sufficient al-

lowance,

lowance, and that he had long thought himself too wise to need the guidance of a mother.

Mrs. Stanhope then informed Mrs. St. Austyn that she had engaged Miss Montgomery to live with her; but, finding the subject vexatious, changed it, saying she should speedily leave London, as it by no means agreed with her, and hoped her sister and Gertrude would accompany her. Mrs. St. Austyn excused herself and daughter for the present, and Mrs. Stanhope, with Gertrude, soon after returned home; where leaving her niece with Marian, she resolved to proceed into the city, and consult a banker of her acquaintance respecting her intention of placing Albert.

Just before her departure, Gertrude observing it was a fine morning, her aunt replied—"If you choose a walk, do not let my absence prevent it; the servant will attend you."

Gertrude and Marian decided for the Park, but at Spring Gardens met some

obstruction

obstruction from a crowd that had formed there; and they were on the point of returning, when Albert, who was going to pay a morning visit to his sister, chanced to meet them, and offered to conduct them through the passage. His protection was immediately accepted, each taking an arm.

They had but just reached the Mall, and Albert was on the point of bidding them a good-morning, when an exclamation of mingled pleasure and surprise from Gertrude attracted the attention of both, and looking forward, they saw Berners advancing towards them. His notice equally attracted by the voice of Gertrude, and his pride stung even to madness on seeing Albert so familiar, rushing forward, unmindful of every other object, he determined to give an affront that could not be brooked, and, coming close to Albert, said aloud—"Despicable poltroon! if you will not exert the spirit of a man, I will expose you wherever we meet."

Albert, who had released his arms, and

stepped before the ladies while Berners was speaking, took no time for reflection, but seizing him by the collar, shook him violently, and, throwing him from him, replied—"Herd with your fellows, nor dare obstruct my passage; whenever you do, I will correct you thus, unless I chance to have a cane in my hand, which I may use to more advantage."

Gertrude screamed aloud, while Marian, pale, trembling, and silent, dropped on a bench, unable to support herself.

The shake and subsequent fall that Berners had received for a moment prevented articulation. Albert's form, though exquisitely proportioned, had not the appearance of such athletic strength as he had shewn; and though Berners would willingly have staked life to life in the modern manner, yet he had no stomach to again feel the power of his antagonist's arm.

Albert, turning, said to Miss St. Austyn —"Pardon, madam, this disagreeable in-

trusion:

trusion: I sought it not, but some provocations are too strong for human patience, however insignificant the object."

The utmost displeasure marked Gertrude's features, and, seating herself by Marian, she remained silent.

At that moment Frederic, who had appointed to meet Berners in the Park, approached, and seeing a confusion, drew near to inquire the cause, when, to his no small mortification, he found from what party the dispute had arisen. Touching his hat slightly to Marian, he immediately joined Berners, and taking his arm, asked an explanation.

Marian in the meantime, somewhat recovered from her fears, proposed to Gertrude to retire—an offer she instantly accepted, lest the dispute, though she knew not on what account, should be renewed; but entirely displeased with Albert, and vexed that she had no opportunity of speaking with Berners, she sullenly took the arm of Marian, Albert walking slowly

by their side, wishing them good-morning when they reached Mrs. Stanhope's.

Mrs. Stanhope had been disappointed in meeting with her friend at home, and in consequence had directly returned.—The surprise and concern of both Marian and Gertrude were still sufficiently visible to attract her notice, and she immediately asked the cause.

Gertrude was silent; for though her heart pleaded entirely in favour of Berners, yet, as he gave the first insult, she knew not how to exculpate him to her aunt.

Marian was likewise silent for a moment; but finding the explanation must come from herself, and unable to bear that her brother should 'suffer in the opinion either of Mrs. Stanhope or Gertrude, she replied, without mentioning Mr. St. Austyn, that Mr. Berners, she knew not by what means, had discovered her former residence, and called there some time before, when he had insulted her in a man-

ner which obliged her to have recourse to her brother, who had in consequence treated him in a very humiliating manner.

Gertrude was astonished; as Marian spoke, she judged the affront was from himself, and her love and pride at once wounded, she made no reply, being ashamed to question, however anxious her curiosity was to be satisfied.

Mrs. Stanhope, who felt no such restraint, for a moment looked astonished; but inquired first, where they had met Albert, and an account of what followed; all of which being answered, she added—

"And when, Miss Montgomery, did you first become acquainted with Berners?"

"I never, madam," returned Marian, "saw him, but in your presence, until today, except when he had the insolence to call at Mrs. Mosely's, which was on the afternoon your generosity enabled me to release Albert."

Mrs. Stanhope paused; a suspicion of something like the truth glanced on her mind,

mind, but suppressing her curiosity, she replied—"It is a silly business; I never had an extraordinary opinion of Berners, but will talk further on this subject with your brother."

The day was passed as usual, but to Gertrude it was the most painful one she had ever experienced, and, under pretence of fatigue and headache, she retired at an early hour.

On Gertrude's departure, Mrs. Stanhope renewed the conversation of the morning; and Marian, at once actuated by gratitude to her protectress, affection to her brother, and detestation of Berners, disclosed the whole—softening, however, the part that Frederic had in the affair, by saying that she had no doubt, from his behaviour to her brother, that he was entirely ashamed of the business, and in all probability would never have taken such a step, had he not been counselled and supported by Berners. Mrs. Stanhope was grieved she had flattered herself Frederic possessed a disposition

disposition congenial to her wishes, and mentally congratulated herself that a step she had determined on had not taken place, viz. doubling his allowance, which she now truly regarded as only increasing his means of dissipation.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Letter—Departure for the Country.

Frederic had no doubt but the contest between Albert and Berners had rendered a full explanation necessary, and that consequently Mrs. Stanhope was apprised of the whole: this idea had kept him absent from that lady some days, and might much longer, had he not received a letter from her, desiring him to call on the ensuing morning.

Unwilling to go, yet not able to fabricate any plausible excuse, he was obliged to attend, Berners ridiculing the idea of his being afraid of the *sermonizing* of his aunt.

The discourse between Mrs. Stanhope and her nephew was long and severe; she spoke of what had passed in the strongest and most repugnant terms. Frederic acknowledged his error, but in vain endeavoured to exculpate Berners, against whom she was highly enraged—finally declaring, that she insisted on her nephew's totally declining his acquaintance, or suppressing his visits at her house—demanding his immediate resolution on the subject.

Frederic, though he felt his error, felt also his independence, and, determined to shake off what Berners called meanness and slavery, at once replied, that though he should be extremely grieved to relinquish the honour she permitted him, yet, he was not young enough to have his acquaintance selected according to the whims

of

of her new favourite. To Miss Montgomery he owed every concession; but none to her brother, who had, he said, repaid the affront with tenfold insult.

"In my opinion he did well, sir," returned Mrs. Stanhope. "But enough has been said on an unpleasant subject: our acquaintance ceases here. I wish you a good-day." So saying, she quitted the apartment, leaving Frederic to return home overwhelmed with vexation; for, in spite of the tenets of Berners, he could not avoid respecting his aunt, and he had also now entirely lost the opportunity of seeing Marian.

Mrs. Stanhope, whose only incentive to remain in town was Frederic and Gertrude, now seriously displeased with the first, and finding Mrs. St. Austyn's pleasurable scheme would almost entirely take up the time of the latter, determined to hasten to the country; therefore, appointing a day for Albert to accompany her, she introduced him to her banker, as a

young friend whose interest she wished to promote, and for whose probity she would be responsible, entreating him to make inquiry for a situation in some mercantile line.

The banker, who well knew the value of Mrs. Stanhope's recommendation, replied, that he had no doubt of being soon able to place the young gentleman agreeably to his wishes; that, in the meantime, the situation of his second clerk was vacant, if he chose to accept it, and that he should be happy to have him as an inmate in his house.

Albert immediately acquiesced, and the agreement was concluded, that he should enter on his new employment the ensuing day. Mrs. Stanhope then returned home, while Albert called at Mrs. Mosely's to dress, being engaged to dine with his sister and her friend, for the last time before they left London.

The ladies had but just entered the drawing-room, previous to their going

down

down to dinner, when Albert joined them, his features animated with a double portion of his usual cheerfulness.

"Indeed, my young friend," said Mrs. Stanhope, "I should judge, if I had any skill in physiognomy, that you had met with something more than commonly pleasing."

"May your skill never be more fallacious than at present, madam!" returned Albert. "In the first place, I own that I am delighted at my success of this morning, as I shall no longer be so heavy a burthen on your generosity; in the next, if you will condescend to read that letter, which I have just received, you will allow that this is one of my fortunate days."

Mrs. Stanhope took the letter, and read aloud as follows:—

"DEAR SIR, *Melness.*

"I have the satisfaction to inform you that I have received an applica-

tion

tion this day for your house and land, from an attorney at Aberdeen, named Macleod, a man of great credit and probity, who wishes to engage it for a friend of his for three years. I know you would rather have chosen a yearly tenant, but I judged that it would be the height of imprudence, as you do not think of returning immediately, to neglect this opportunity, as he not only agrees to pay the demanded rent of forty pounds, but also to make any reasonable allowance for the furniture. I have therefore desired my wife to remove the articles respecting which she thought you most particular, and those we shall preserve with care until we have the pleasure of seeing you, and have returned an answer accepting the offer of Mr. Macleod, which I hope will likewise meet your approbation. I am, with respects to Miss Montgomery, sir,

"Your obliged humble servant,

"ALEX. HEME."

"I con-

"I congratulate you on this business," said Mrs. Stanhope, "since it appears to give you so much satisfaction; and as we are alone, give me leave to present you an order on your new employer for thirty pounds: you may want money before any becomes due either from him or for the rent of your house."

Albert's refusal was at once in the strongest yet most grateful terms; but finding Mrs. Stanhope displeased at his obstinacy, and receiving her word to be repaid from his first account, he was at length obliged to acquiesce.

After dinner, purposely to give the brother and sister an opportunity for a private conference, she pretended business with Mrs. St. Austyn, whom she found surrounded with company, and, after passing what to her appeared a very tedious two hours, returned home—first telling her sister that she should on the morrow call and bid her farewell, as she proposed setting out the next day for Dorsetshire.

Albert

Albert and his sister had passed their time more satisfactorily. She had again wrested from him a promise not to meet Berners; and he had renewed his affectionate cautions respecting Mr. St. Austyn —insisting that, if any future offer, of whatever kind, was made, she should disclose it to Mrs. Stanhope, as otherwise it would be the height of imprudence as well as ingratitude. Marian made no difficulty in giving this promise; and on Mrs. Stanhope's return, taking a respectful leave of that lady, and an affectionate one of his sister, he bade them farewell.

Early the next morning Mrs. Stanhope called to bid her sister adieu, and with the utmost difficulty could refrain telling her how ill the dress and airs of eighteen sat upon forty-five; but more materially interested about Frederic, she conjured her in the strongest terms, if possible, to separate him from Berners, who, she was convinced, was a bad man, and countenanced him in error, though she did not enter into the

the discovery that she had lately made. She then desired that Gertrude might speedily be permitted to visit her, and received her sister's acquiescence to both requests; though in all probability she scarcely thought of them any more, being too much devoted to pleasure to concern herself about the morals or happiness of her children.

The following morning Albert entered on his new employment, and Mrs. Stanhope, with Marian, left London.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Credulity of Lovers—Good Advice thrown away.

Mrs. St. Austyn's whole time was now devoted to pleasure; but though her inclination led to pursuits of that nature, her constitution had too long been accustomed to the regularity of a country life to bear the innovation, and her health, though almost imperceptibly, began to decline. Frederic and Berners were not frequently of Mrs. St. Austyn's parties, and near a fortnight had elapsed before any opportunity offered for Gertrude to speak to Berners unnoticed, and, even then, surrounded with company in the drawing-room. Berners had remarked that she

she had for some time treated him distantly, and, his pride more than love wounded, he attributed the change to Albert, and, as the moment offered, did not fail to express his suspicions. Gertrude retorted on Marian, and in consequence an explanation took place, in which the artful Berners exculpated himself satisfactorily to her inexperience. That he had called on Marian he owned, but from the most generous motives, and employed by her brother, who, hearing she was unhappily situated, had sent to offer her assistance; but that, either from pride or some sinister motive to injure both Frederic and him with Mrs. Stanhope, the brother and sister had not only treated him with the utmost insolence, but invented falsehoods to strengthen the deception.

Gertrude had neither opportunity to investigate the truth of this story, nor yet experience sufficient to see at once its fallacy: accustomed from her childhood to love and think well of Berners, she could

not

not suddenly change her opinion; yet, when alone, she was staggered. Short as their acquaintance had been, she loved Marian; and though her brother was not adapted to her taste, yet she could not but allow that he was an accomplished man. Berners had also accused him of cowardice, but that she felt some inclination to dispute; but for pride, that she readily allowed; for never had she seen any so strongly marked as that in his behaviour to Berners in the Park.

Frederic and Berners remained at Knightsbridge, and though they frequently passed the greater part of the night at play, yet the former, still dissatisfied with himself, usually rose early, and in a pensive walk gave to reflection an hour which he could not spare from the pursuits of the day. In one of these excursions, after much deliberation, he determined to apply to Albert respecting Marian, and unknown to Berners, whom he no longer wished to consult on that subject, as he

dreaded

dreaded his further interference, lest the quarrel should be revived. Early therefore, the ensuing day, he walked to Mrs. Mosely's, and inquiring, found that Albert had changed his residence; and having received his address, waited on him at his new habitation.

Albert received him with cold civility, and requested his commands. Frederic for a moment hesitated, but at length said —"I have already, Mr. Montgomery, expressed my sorrow for what is past. Your sister is necessary to my happiness, and, could I hope your countenance, would, I flatter myself, not reject my suit. In a few months I shall be of age, and then propose to make her mine by the most indissoluble ties. This unhappy business has estranged me from Mrs. Stanhope; I therefore am prevented making those proposals which would with more propriety be offered to herself."

"In my sister's name I thank you," answered Albert; "but I am convinced she is

is in no haste to change her situation. The acquaintance you have with each other is too recent for either to form any determined opinion whether your tempers or characters would suit, and which I myself am inclined to doubt. Marian's education has given her a taste for retired domestic life; yours, I fancy, the contrary. In the next place, she shall *steal* into no family: she is dependent on yours, and your first necessary preliminary would be to consult them. Believe me, Mr. St. Austyn, this passion is merely the effervescence of youth, and which a short time and other objects will banish from your memory; for love, *mere love*, unsupported by reason and undignified by friendship, is but a malady, and easily cured. In your case, both are wanting. Your reason cannot applaud what you propose, because I presume you hold it necessary to conceal it from your family. In the next, have you not given a proof that she did not possess either your esteem

or

or friendship? for when did those sentiments wound their object, or redouble the stab of adversity by unmerited insult? Sudden resolves are seldom wise or fortunate; reflect therefore on this business, and I am convinced you will hereafter applaud me for the answer I have given."

"Though I undoubtedly have erred," returned Frederic, at once humiliated and vexed to be refused, "it is no proof that I wanted esteem for Miss Montgomery; and my reason revolted at the step, though I adopted it."

"I truly believe," replied Albert, in a more friendly accent, "by your behaviour to me when I called on you, and also by your present conduct, that you are rather misled than naturally depraved. If so, why not make one noble effort?—shake off the trammels of vice, and boldly *dare be virtuous.*"

"Your reprehension is free and severe," answered Frederic, with some haughtiness, "and

"and distant from the subject on which I came."

"That I regard as already answered," replied Albert. "For my censure, I confess it free, but rather friendly than severe, and as such I could wish you to receive it; for, notwithstanding what has passed, I cannot forget that you are the nephew of my benefactress, and could wish that you may not only inherit her wealth, but her virtues."

"I can spare your advice, as you refuse your concurrence in what is so very necessary to my happiness," said Frederic.

"My concurrence is only a secondary business," returned Albert. "The friendship of Marian, and the approbation of your family, are, as I before observed, the first steps to be considered."

Frederic, finding, by the cool determined manner of Albert, that he had nothing to expect from him, with some displeasure bade him good-morning, and returned home,

home, where he found Berners waiting to engage him for a party in the evening.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Marriage declined—A Conversation.

Mrs. Stanhope, with Marian, had not been at the Vale more than a month, when the latter received by the same post two letters, one from her brother, the other from Frederic. The first simply informed her of what had passed between Mr. St. Austyn and himself, desiring her to relate the whole to Mrs. Stanhope; the second contained, amidst many expressions of contrition, an offer of his hand, lamenting the distance with which her brother had treated him; and concluding by informing her that

that his fortune enabled him to marry when of age, without the interference of any one—declaring an unalterable affection, and entreating a gentle answer.

Marian was confused at the receipt of the letters, and for some time could not assume courage to obey her brother in disclosing the contents to Mrs. Stanhope. The graces of Frederic's person, the gentleness of his manners, and the respect with which he had treated her the evening he saw her at his aunt's, had in some measure interested her in his favour; but Berners' offer had destroyed the illusion, and the dawnings of esteem were stifled by disdain and offended virtue. His letter, however, bespoke contrition; and, though it could not replace him in her esteem, at least softened the acrimony of her resentment. At length, summoning her utmost courage, she entered Mrs. Stanhope's apartment, and laying both before her, she said —"Permit me, madam, to retire while

you

you peruse these letters; I wish to write to my brother, and will take this opportunity."

Mrs. Stanhope acquiesced, and, reading the contents, was charmed with Albert's conduct. That of her nephew gave her far less satisfaction; she regarded him as a young man who would hazard every thing to gratify his wishes, and which failing to accomplish by illicit means, he had adopted the hasty resolution of marriage, with a woman whose disposition, character, and connexions, he was almost unacquainted with. Having perused and reflected for some time on the letters, she, by her maid, desired the presence of Marian, who immediately attended the summons.

"My good girl," said she, "I am pleased with both your conduct and your brother's on this occasion. But may I ask what answer you mean to give to Frederic?"

"My brother has already answered for me," returned Marian. "Could I, madam,

dam, even forget the distance fortune has placed between us, I can neither forget my gratitude to you nor the proofs he has given me of libertinism."

"You will not accept the hand of Frederic then?" said Mrs. Stanhope.

"Never, madam. I own Mr. St. Austyn is amiable, handsome, and accomplished, and, had I not known the blemishes of his character, might perhaps have found it difficult to refuse being raised to ease and independence by a man so calculated to be beloved: as it is, I feel no reluctance in relinquishing what I am convinced would constitute my greatest unhappiness. The example of my father and mother has imprinted so perfect an idea of matrimonial happiness on my mind, that I cannot make it a secondary object. I am truly satisfied under your protection, and hope you will never withdraw it, until I merit that punishment which at least I will endeavour to avoid."

"My dear girl," answered Mrs. Stanhope

hope, "so every way have I found you worthy my esteem, that I confess a separation from you, however new our acquaintance, would give me concern, unless it was to insure your own happiness, to which I would willingly contribute, but, like yourself, hold it too precious to be imprudently lavished. Reply, therefore, as you think proper: I have no doubt of the propriety of your conduct. Would I were as well satisfied with that of Frederic!"

Marian, exclusive of what she had written to her brother, replied also to Frederic, thanking him for his offer, but declined both that and farther correspondence, without however reflecting or expressing displeasure on past events.

Frederic had waited in anxious expectation for the answer of Marian, which, when received, crushed at once his hopes, as, without being severe, it was peremptory. Pride for some time sustained his resentment, and, resolved to forget her,

 he

he plunged yet more deeply into dissipation. Disregarded as he thought himself by his aunt, and refused by the woman he loved, he considered Berners as his only friend, and, vexed that he had concealed any of the steps he had taken from him, now disclosed them openly, together with the refusal he had received.

"By my soul," answered Berners, "it is all art—confounded art—the refinement of prudery, to enhance the value of future favours, while, in the interim, she and her bully laugh at you! His insolence I well remember; and though my revenge has been protracted, it is not forgotten. Would you be advised by me, entreat no longer; bear off the girl; she will then find you a man of spirit, and be glad of an excuse for acting according to her own inclination."

"Without allowing for the difficulty of such an enterprise, I pledged my word never to pursue her but on honourable terms," replied Frederic.

"Pish! a promise to an impudent knave and

and a designing saucy jilt!—Honour has nothing to do in the business," returned Berners.

"If I follow your advice, I think not; but I gave my word, and am determined to keep it."

"And marry her?" exclaimed Berners.

"And marry her," repeated Frederic; "that is, if I can persuade her to accept me; which, however, I must confess I see no probability of."

One of Berners' new acquaintance was at that moment announced, and the conversation in consequence ceased. He came to engage them for a party in the evening, which was accepted with pleasure by Berners, and through complaisance by Frederic, who played rather from a fear of being accounted a novice than any real inclination; but as it was totally immaterial through what motive they played, so they lost their money, their new *friends* were perfectly satisfied with them.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Bustle—Different Thoughts on the same Subject—A Promise knavishly demanded, and imprudently given.

Disordered with the wine he had drank the preceding evening, Frederic remained at home some hours after his companion, and was in a very unpleasant reverie, when a loud shriek, accompanied by a noise like some one falling, struck his ear from a lower apartment. Losing no time in conjecture, he rushed down stairs, and opened the parlour, where he found his hostess had suddenly been seized with a fit, and a young woman, not apparently above eighteen, supporting her.

"Oh, she will die!—my mother will die!"

die!" exclaimed she; "and I have no one to procure her assistance. I have this instant sent out the servant."

Frederic made no reply, but, unmindful of being without a hat, though it poured with rain, ran out, and recollecting an apothecary at some distance, hastened thither, and soon returned with assistance.

By proper applications and bleeding Mrs. Southern was at length somewhat recovered, when Berners entered; for, finding all in confusion, the door open, and seeing his pupil in the parlour, he made no scruple to introduce himself. Frederic and the young girl were still supporting Mrs. Southern, who at length spoke faintly. The sound of her voice, though hardly articulate, threw her daughter into a transport of pleasure.—"Oh!" exclaimed she, "my mother will be spared to me. If she had not had immediate assistance, she would have perished; and to your goodness, sir, I owe it," turning to

Frederic, and in the warmth of her gratitude kissing his hand.

Frederic also expressed his satisfaction; and Mrs. Southern having recovered her recollection, and the apothecary entreating that the utmost quietness might be observed, the gentlemen retired.

They had hardly entered their apartment, when Berners exclaimed—"By my life, Frederic, you are a lucky fellow! Could I have foreseen this adventure, I would have staid at home, and at least had an equal chance with you."

"I do not perfectly comprehend you," replied Frederic. "I own it is lucky that the poor woman is recovered, but would willingly have transferred the whole merit, if any, to you; for it has alarmed and agitated me so much, that I shall not recover it all day."

"It has agitated me so much," said Berners, "that I shall perhaps not recover it this month."

"Surely,

"Surely, Berners, you cannot be so unfeeling as to turn the situation of the poor woman into a jest?"

"Nay, it is past all jest," returned Berners—"it is sober, serious sadness. The illness of the old woman was certainly alarming; but it was the *young* one that peculiarly interested me. Did you ever see so bewitching a creature?"

"Really I can hardly say—I paid little attention—my cares were all for the mother."

"Oh, thou stoic!" exclaimed Berners, laughing. "Had I felt the pressure of her lips as you did, I should have forgotten all prudence, and caught her in my arms. Surely you have no more soul than a stockfish."

"What! the deliberate philosopher in love!" returned Frederic—"the fabric of years destroyed in an instant!—his favourite tenets put to flight!—for, doubtless, he has now found a female capable of all——"

"That her mother was before her," interrupted Berners; "nor do I bargain for more. To confess the truth, I never, in so short a space, felt so interested for a girl before: but I am neither mad enough to retract my tenets nor commit *matrimony*," said he, satirically; "I am neither *young* enough, nor quite *old* enough for such folly. To be sure, if I could persuade her to think like a rational creature on some particular subjects, I should have no objection to making her my pupil. But where has she hid herself, that we never saw her before?"

"I fancy, by a word or two that passed between her and the apothecary, that she only returned from the country last night," said Frederic. "But surely, Berners, you will not attempt any gallantry with her; it would be a most unpardonable breach of hospitality."

"In such a case," replied Berners, "I fancy you will find but few young men who would not commit a breach of hospitality,

tality,

tality, as you call it. If I loved the girl, and she loved me in return, the obligation would be mutual, without injury on either side."

"But how long would you love her?" said Frederic.

"How long!" replied he, laughing—"what a ridiculous question! and impossible to be answered, it must depend on so many concomitant circumstances; but as long as reason would let me. It is not in nature for man always to eat the same food, gaze on the same prospect, read the same book, without in time loathing; and is it not the same in love? Variety is as necessary in that as in any other pursuit, or why did nature implant that desire in our constitutions? Its dictates are just, and I am determined to follow them invariably."

"By the same rule," answered Frederic, "you might say that nature has implanted the wish of possessing your neighbour's wife, house, horse, or purse, and that every

means are just to procure the attainment. Again, for that love of variety, to you it may be necessary; but I cannot seriously be of that opinion, for why should sex alone cause so great a difference? Among men we do not grow weary of friendship, for it is cemented or strengthened by time; and why should it not be equally permanent with a female? Passion, I can easily surmise, will not always last; but may it not be replaced by the calmer sentiment of esteem?"

"Cease to admire a woman's person," returned Berners, "and she is irrevocably your enemy; that is, if you have already done so. For instance, can you point out one that would calmly see you bear your vows to another, and not think her province invaded? Give up then all chimerical ideas—they are naturally too selfish to form any connexion in which person has no share; nor do I think there is a single exception in the universe; see one, you see all—the same matter, the only difference

difference education. But *à-propos*, to change the subject, I have seen your mother and sister: I called there this morning. Mrs. St. Austyn was not at home when I first went, but returned before my departure. I do not think that lady behaves to me with her accustomed friendship; but there is no accounting for the caprices of women; besides, your sister does not appear to think her health so good as usual."

"I am sorry for it," returned Frederic, warmly. "I feel myself unpardonable, for I have not seen her for above a week, and even then I thought she did not seem well. I wish she would go into Yorkshire, or rather to Mrs. Stanhope's; for a town life, I am convinced, does not agree with her."

The discourse concluded by Frederic declaring that he would dine at Mrs. St. Austyn's, and entreating Berners to accompany him; but he declined it, saying he would meet him in the evening at the coffee-house.

Though

Though Berners had merely given his visit the appearance of chance, it was in truth not so; for, passing through St. James's-street, he saw Mrs. St. Austyn's chariot, with that lady alone; and concluding from thence that he should find Gertrude unaccompanied, the whim seized him to call there.

On his entrance, she was in tears; and addressing her with that softness he so well could assume, he entreated to know the cause.

"Indeed," replied she, "I have great reason; my mother's health is alarmingly altered. I know she is gone this morning to consult some physician of great note—though she did not say so, nor yet take me with her, as she knew it would distress me. The apothecary advised her to do so yesterday, and mentioned the efficacy of the country air, which I trust she will have recourse to."

A sudden thought at that instant struck Berners: should Mrs. St. Austyn's malady, which

which appeared consumptive, terminate fatally, in all probability Gertrude would be independent, for she undoubtedly was her mother's favourite; in which case, could he secure her, his views would be gratified. He therefore first employed all his sophistry to calm her affliction, then turned the discourse to his unalterable affection, and, throwing himself at her feet, entreated her to promise, in case the worst of her fears were realized, that she would accept him as her protector.

Gertrude was too little acquainted with the world, and too much accustomed to think well of Berners, to suspect evil; but, startled at the request of a promise which she concluded binding, she hesitated.

"Yet why should I request it?" continued Berners; "I wish you too well to press you to share the fortune of so poor a man. May you be happy!—*I* only will be bound by promise, though that cannot make me more securely yours." So saying,

ing, he rose, and, taking a pen from the stand on the table, wrote as follows:—

"I pledge my solemn oath to marry Gertrude St. Austyn, and, *in case of her refusal*, to remain single.

"Charles Berners."

"There, madam," said he, presenting the paper, "deign to give that trifle a place in your pocketbook; it may remind you of a man who might otherwise be forgotten—one who has only love to offer; but had he empires, they should only be shared with you."

The romantic disposition of Gertrude awakened by these protestations, and scorning to be outdone in generosity by her lover, she gave him a similar written promise, though without the oath, and which was hardly put up when Mrs. St. Austyn returned.

Berners

Berners had said to Frederic that he did not find his mother so friendly as usual, and the remark was not without foundation. Though that lady had paid little regard to Mrs. Stanhope's remonstrances at the time, yet they had since made some impression; for the eye of high health and that of sickness frequently consider the same object in very different points of view. She complained of the neglect of her son, and even went so far as to say that it was the duty of a tutor to represent to his pupils when they acted erroneously—not to share in their follies or countenance their disobedience, though they might be advanced beyond the years of childhood, yet not arrived at those of discretion.

Berners returned little answer to this reprimand, and soon after took his leave, determined not to repeat his visit in haste.

As Mrs. St. Austyn had been particularly petulant since she was ill, Gertrude attributed her behaviour wholly to that

and

and Frederic's neglect; and Berners was no sooner gone than she tenderly entreated her mother to tell her the physician's opinion, for she was certain she had been to consult one.

"He says then," replied Mrs. St. Austyn, peevishly, "that I shall neither get rid of my cough nor pain in the side in town; we must therefore prepare for the country immediately."

"Heaven send it may relieve you!" replied Gertrude, affectionately kissing her. "But will you, my dear mamma, go to Mrs. Stanhope's, or into Yorkshire?"

"To the latter," replied Mrs. St. Austyn. "I do not choose to bear the lectures of my sister, who predicted that my constitution would be injured by remaining a winter in town; neither do I wish to associate with that girl she has chosen for her companion—that Miss Montgomery, as I think you call her."

Gertrude was not displeased to hear that the intended journey was not into Dorsetshire;

shire; for though she loved her aunt, and had felt much inclined to be attached to Marian, the fabricated story of Berners had in some measure poisoned her mind.

"You may write to my sister," said Mrs. St. Austyn, "and tell her we are going into the country; but do not, at least at present, mention my illness. I have no doubt but change of air will remove it, and all be well."

Frederic, as he had said, dined with his mother, who attributed his visit to what had passed in the morning between her and Berners. He observed she was much thinner than when she came to town; but there was company, and she was perfectly cheerful; he therefore apprehended no danger. On her informing him that she should leave London in a few days, he promised to join her in Yorkshire in the course of a month; and about eight o'clock left her, and went to his appointment with Berners.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XX.

Gaming, Quarrelling, and Fighting.

Berners had dined at the coffee-house, where he had appointed to meet Frederic, who, when he joined him, found him in a private apartment, deeply engaged at play. Frederic had no inclination to add to the party, but at length, by repeated persuasions, he gave way, and took his place at the table. For some time fortune appeared to favour him; but, at the end of a single hour, it had so far changed, that he found himself a considerable loser. Determined to redeem his loss, he staked more deeply, until, convinced the effort was vain, he declared he would play no more that night.

"What! leave off at ten!" exclaimed Berners—

Berners—"impossible! What will you do with yourself until bedtime?"

The party joined Berners, but, for once, persuasion and ridicule were equally vain—Frederic was resolved to retire, but entreated he might not hasten Berners, though he well knew he must feel his losses equal with his own. Berners, however, petulantly declined it, and accompanied him.

The gaming-room was on the first story; they therefore came down, and were passing through the coffee-room to a coach that was waiting for them, when, at a table reading a newspaper, they discovered Albert; and on the other side, an elderly gentleman, in a military dress, employed in the same manner.

Frederic was merely heated with wine—Berners was nearly intoxicated, and, taking no time for deliberation, flew to the table where Albert was sitting, and snatching up a glass of wine that stood before him, in the sight of the whole company

pany threw it in his face, saying—"Take that, Montgomery, for I know you dare not fight."

This affront was too much for even the temper of Albert; for, in his haste, overturning the table before him, he rushed on Berners, who, regardless of the unarmed state of his enemy, drew his sword (being dressed), and stood on the defensive. This was, however, disregarded by the exasperated Albert, who, striking aside the sword at the expence of a small cut in his hand, immediately closed with his antagonist, threw him, wrenched the sword, snapped it asunder, and with the part that remained to the hilt, struck him when he rose, in spite of resistance, several smart blows on the back, exclaiming—"Villain! scoundrel! pimp! why wilt thou for ever put me to this trouble?—It is true I will not disgrace myself with fighting such a reptile, but let this be a proof that I *dare* treat thee as thou deservest."

Berners,

Berners, stunned, ashamed, and confused, from the fall and disgrace he had received, remained silent; but Frederic, exasperated at the treatment of his friend, and soured with Albert for his refusal to second his wishes with his sister, advanced, saying—"You go too far, sir: if those epithets are merited, they must revert to me; and I here publicly declare you a coward, if you refuse me satisfaction."

Albert's passion was raised—he accepted the challenge, Frederic desiring him to fix his time and place; which was immediately done in a whisper, and the next morning appointed, as Frederic declared that he was determined to delay it no longer.

"You are in the right, young gentleman," said the old officer who was sitting at the same table with Albert when the affront was given; "you appear to want correction, and the sooner it is bestowed the better. For this young man, I never

saw

saw him before in my life; but curse me if I would not second so brave a fellow to the last drop of my blood. Why, your friend there stood no more chance with him than a mouse in the claws of a cat. His fine bones are not used to such rough hugs; and to draw his sword too on an unarmed man!—he deserves to be kicked out of all company."

Frederic's answer was replete with passion, but having no resource, he took the arm of the humiliated and sobered Berners, and left the coffee-room.

The quarrel had been so sudden and unexpected, that all interference at the moment was impossible; but, the confusion somewhat appeased, the bravery of Albert resounded from all quarters, the old officer particularly saying—"May I entreat your name, sir? I shall be proud of your further acquaintance."

"Albert Montgomery, sir."

"I thought that puppy called you by some

some such name. Mr. Montgomery, you are an honest fellow; give me leave to drink your health."

Albert bowed, and a conversation ensued, in which the stranger was more inquisitive than strict politeness would allow; but there was a respectability about him, though mixed with eccentricity, that attracted the attention of Albert, so that, before they separated, he informed him that the quarrel had arisen in consequence of an affront offered his sister.

The stranger commended him; and after drinking a bottle of wine together, as Albert rose to bid him good-night, he said —"I am an old soldier, have had the command of a regiment, and, as I have no doubt but you must meet these hot-brained ruffians, will willingly accompany you."

Albert accepted his offer with thanks, informing him that seven was the appointed time; then entreated his address, and said he would call on him.

"I am an early riser," replied the old gentleman, "and would prefer waiting on you. You need not fear my punctuality."

They then separated, Albert giving him his address at the banker's.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Man discontented with himself—A Soliloquy—And a Duel.

FREDERIC and Berners returned to Knightsbridge in a hackney-coach. Little conversation took place by the way; for the first was severely vexed and dispirited, and the latter completely humiliated.

On their arrival at home, Berners, with some confusion, said—"You will permit me to accompany you to-morrow morning?"

"Do

"Do not think me unkind if I decline it; I will write to-night to captain Watson, who I am confident will willingly attend me. I am grieved that ever I caused you such repeated vexation, and conjure you if possible to forget it. Your presence would only add to the confusion of the business; Montgomery's pride might urge you to some action that would only involve us further, for neither you nor I have bodily strength to contend with him in the way he has adopted; and for a proper meeting, he has always declined until the present instance, and which he would not now have accepted could he have avoided it, I sincerely think."

"If you don't find him a coward, I will suffer annihilation," returned Berners. "He knows his strength, and to fools passes it for courage. In this case act as you please. I did not indeed expect a refusal; but if I am not revenged, notwithstanding his brutality, may I hereafter be branded for a scoundrel!"

Frederic did not appear disposed to continue the conversation, but writing a note to captain Watson, who was among the most respectable acquaintances he had formed since he came to town, he shook hands with Berners, desiring him not to rise early, and retired to his apartment.

If Frederic's thoughts had been unpleasant in company, they were doubly so when alone in the quiet of his chamber, where he could review his actions without fallacious gloss, and weigh them before that unbiassed judge, his conscience. Truly could he have said with the poet,

> "Here's room for meditation e'en to madness,
> Till the mind burst with thinking."

At length said he, mentally—"Happiness in all probability was within my grasp; but I threw it from me. Let me for a moment suppose myself in Montgomery's place; should I have acted as he has done? If I dare answer that question, I hope I should. My fortune large, and in a few

months

months in my own power, Marian might have been my wife; now, she hates, scorns, and despises me for insulting her poverty. Would Berners had never interfered! then that abominable proposal had not been made. Yet, poor fellow," continued he, after a moment's pause, "it was for my happiness that he took so derogatory a step—the extent of his friendship rendering him unmindful of the disgrace. I grieve for the humiliation it has cost him, and cannot make too much retribution. Yet to make amends by endeavouring to take the life of Montgomery!—I must never see his sister more. Ah! the event of to-morrow is immaterial to me: if I conquer, I shall only live to be despised by her I love, and yet more by myself; if he succeed, what loss shall I be to mankind? who will miss me? No one; a scene of folly will be closed, and I shall soon deservedly be forgotten."

At length he went to his desk and wrote two letters, one to his aunt, and another to

 Marian,

Marian, enclosing the latter in Mrs. Stanhope's; then, somewhat more composed, he undressed, and went to bed.

Albert also had returned home vexed and dispirited. He certainly did not fear the meeting with Frederic, but his obligations to Mrs. Stanhope acted as a restraint, and made him deplore the necessity he was under; yet, determined to banish uneasy reflections, he hastened to rest.

In the morning he had recovered his usual composure, and was prepared and cheerful when the old gentleman was announced. Thanking him for his punctuality, for it was scarcely half-past six, they departed for the appointment, which was in a field adjoining Primrose Hill, little discourse taking place by the way.

They had not been many minutes there, when Frederic and his friend captain Watson joined them.—"In the hurry of last night," said Frederic, with some confusion, "though this appointment was made, no mention,

mention was made of weapons; I am however provided, and you may take your choice," producing a sword and a pair of pistols.

"I have only my sword," replied Albert, carelessly, taking it from under his coat; "I had no pistols, and did not think it worth while to purchase any for such an occasion; besides, from my boyish days I have been accustomed to shoot at a mark; we therefore perhaps should not be on equal terms."

The carelessness of Albert's manner Frederic construed into insult, and anger for a time overpowered the compunction he was inclined to feel; and exasperated at what he regarded as a mere *bravado*, he peremptorily insisted on his taking one of the pistols; which at length was complied with, though with apparent reluctance.

The ground being measured, Frederic appeared to wait for Albert; until, perceiving

ceiving him to be in no haste, he called somewhat peevishly to quicken him.

"You will please to fire first," said Albert, calmly; "I am prepared."

Frederic at that moment cast his eyes on Montgomery's face, and the blush of shame tinged his cheek, when he considered him as Marian's brother, remembered his forbearance, and the undaunted boldness with which he had warned him to shake off the trammels of vice, and dare be virtuous; yet ashamed to retract, his hand trembling with the conscious unworthiness of his cause, he fired, but far wide of his antagonist, at the same time calling on him aloud to return it, as if fearful of giving his thoughts a moment's pause.

"I have already said," returned Albert, without obeying the summons, "that I did not expect your skill equal to mine in the use of fire-arms; few people have had the same practice; for example, yonder tree

tree is more distant, and much smaller in the trunk than your body, yet will I venture any wager that I hit it at the first attempt." So saying, he fired, and fixed the ball in the bark.

"Confusion!" exclaimed Frederic, stamping on the ground with rage, on finding Albert began to treat him with the same contempt he assumed with Berners; "load your pistol, and act with honour."

"*Act with honour!*" repeated Albert, forcibly, and fixing his eyes contemptuously on Frederic; "I revere your motion—*act with honour.*"

"This is not in human patience to bear," exclaimed Frederic, dashing his pistol on the ground; "draw your sword, and defend yourself."

Albert, thus pressed, had no alternative; but his calmness gave him far the advantage over his adversary, who, mad with passion, left himself entirely open to his superior skill.

"Pshaw!" cried Albert, speaking be-

tween every pass, which he parried with admirable dexterity, neither giving nor receiving a wound, "you keep no guard —you have not temper for fencing. There —and there again I could have hit you. The next pass I shall have your sword. There—I would not fight with you for straws."

Albert was right; the passion of Frederic made him totally unequal to the contest; for, as he predicted, he disarmed him; when, changing his manner, and regarding him with more complaisance, he said, returning his sword—"I am sorry that a nephew of Mrs. Stanhope's should force me to this. Take your life, sir, and mend it."

"My life, the gift of Montgomery, is hateful to me," exclaimed Frederic; "and the obligation would be to release me from it."

"It would be strange indeed if, as the gift of Montgomery, it should be of value, when, as the inestimable trust of your

Creator,

Creator, you have endeavoured to throw it away, in a cause which, in your calmer moments, you must condemn." Thus speaking, and without waiting for a reply, Albert turned to his second, and with him left the field.

CHAPTER XXII.

Montgomery patiently bears some very humiliating Epithets.

For some minutes Albert and his companion had proceeded in silence, when suddenly the old gentleman stopped, looked him in the face, and exclaimed—"What were the Christian names of your father and mother?—I think I can guess, so mind you tell me the truth."

"Tell you the truth!" replied Albert,

 astonished,

astonished, and regarding the old man with pity, supposing his mind was deranged. "Are you well, sir?—My father's name was Albert, my mother's Marian."

"I knew it, I knew it," interrupted he, "from some words you dropped last night. Oh, it was a devilish lucky night for you!"

"A lucky night for me!" returned Albert, somewhat piqued, but still pitying his supposed infirmity; "I know not what you mean."

"Yes, sir, the luckiest night of your life. Nay, you may frown; I know you are a plaguy impudent fellow—I have had pretty good proof of that; but notwithstanding I dare repeat it—a good job for *you*—a fortunate dash that same glass of wine."

"My good sir," said Albert, calmly, now convinced his senses were disordered, "take my arm; I am afraid this disagreeable business has deranged you. I am grieved at the occasion."

"That's

"That's a confounded lie, however," replied the old man; "it is impossible you should be grieved at the occasion. But, as I said before, you are a cursed impudent dog; for, not content with conquering the fellow, you laughed in his face the whole time; and now you want to persuade me I am out of my senses."

"A lie!—a confounded lie!—an impudent dog!" repeated Albert, passionately; but, recovering his temper, he added gently—"Be calm, I entreat, sir; I will attend you home."

"Yes, sir, I intend you should attend me home, and attend me afterwards too, for I believe we shall not part in a hurry."

Albert made no reply; he was vexed that he had accepted the old gentleman's company, who, he was convinced, was a lunatic—an idea he was the more confirmed in, when he reflected on the oddity of his questions the night before.

"Oh, sir!" continued the old gentleman—"what, you are silent and sulky, are

are you? Perhaps you are planning how to drub me next. But you will meet with your match, egad! I think I should make you knock under."

"Knock under!" repeated Albert, between his closed teeth.

"Yes, sir; you need not mutter, I speak plain—knock under. I have brought down as fine a fellow."

"My good sir," replied Albert, determined to sooth him, "will you favour me by hastening towards town? My presence in the office will be necessary."

"Damn the office!" returned he; "I will quicken my pace for no man," walking slower than before.

Albert was vexed almost beyond his patience, yet, pity more predominant than anger, he walked slowly by his side in silence.

"Your sister, I suppose, is a fine girl," resumed he, "or those fools would not have made such a fuss about her. I will take her home. I sha'n't mind acknow-

ledging

ledging a handsome wench. She will receive her good fortune, I dare say, with more complaisance than you do."

"A handsome wench!—take her home!—her good fortune!" repeated Albert, forgetting his calmness—"I know not what you mean. I can bear no more; but your years protect you, for I cannot think it insanity, the insult is too pointed and direct."

"You are like to bear it notwithstanding," replied the old gentleman. "As I told you before, I have beat as fine a fellow—I made your own father knock under."

"You lie, villain!" exclaimed Albert, only restrained from striking him by the consideration of his age.

"Lie to your teeth," answered the old man. "I repeat, that I fought and disarmed *your* father: and though I vanquished him, he was as impudent as yourself; for he would not give me his pro-

mise,

mise, but set me at defiance, and stole my sister Marian the very week after."

Surprise had the effect of a blow on Albert; he staggered a few paces, looked attentively in the old man's face, and remained silent.

"What! impudence dumb!" resumed he. "I told you you would knock under; I have a devilish good guess, though I did not intend the truth to slip out so soon; but you provoked me."

"If I indeed stand before colonel O'Bryen, the brother of my honoured and revered mother," replied Albert, endeavouring to overcome his surprise, "I submit; my ignorance and the provocation will, I am sure, plead my excuse."

"Egad, I don't know that! But pray how came so high-spirited a gentleman to condescend to be a banker's clerk?"

"I see no condescension in the case, sir," returned Albert. "My situation required exertion; I am paid for my labour, and

and eat the bread I earn with cheerfulness."

"The bread you *earn!*" repeated the old gentleman; "I understand you—that's a stroke for me; but before I have done, I will make you eat the bread you do *not* earn, and with cheerfulness too, or I will know the reason why."

"I hope I shall always *deserve* the bread I eat," Albert replied.

"Hang your deserts! Now you are coming round again; but I wonder at nothing after your behaviour this morning. I have seen you, I think, in all your glory. Faith! if I had been the young fellow, you should not have got off so easily."

"He did his best, sir, I suppose," replied Albert, smiling.

"Yes, sir, and you did not do your worst—You are a d——d provoking dog. How would you like a man to turn his back on you, fire against a tree, and say it was smaller than your body?"

"I think

"I think I should be much obliged to him, sir," returned Albert.

"I think you tell a lie, sir. And then for your fencing," throwing himself into attitudes, and repeating—"I would not fight with you for straws. There, sir—and there I had you. But where the devil will you have me? Oh, it was a high scene; yet I could have excused it all, if you had given the fellow but one touch up, just to let out a little of his mad blood, and tame him for the future."

"The apothecary, sir, may do that business with more safety," replied Albert.

"There is no apothecary in London could do a man's business more completely, or in so short a time, as yourself. Egad, I never saw a fellow fence so well in my life; why you could whip a man into the next world with so light a hand that he would never feel his journey."

"I thank you, sir," replied Albert; "but I have no ambition to be accounted

the

the first human butcher of the profession."

"Butcher!" repeated the colonel.

"Yes, sir; that is with all due deference to the brute butchers, whose occupation you must allow far more useful to society; and which, were I necessitated to choose either, I should adopt, as I would sooner kill an ox than a man."

"You are a plaguy queer compound, and almost as odd a fellow as myself."

Albert bowed.—"It is perhaps hereditary, sir," he answered.

"Your impudence is, however, so," replied the colonel: "that you inherit from your father."

"My father," interrupted Albert, "was the best of men, nor was his temper ever moved without sufficient cause."

"He did not fence so well as yourself," answered the colonel, paying no regard to the warmth with which he spoke.

"He, however, instructed me," said Albert—"I had no other master."

"Well,

"Well, well, I understand both your parents are dead; to be sure, I could have wished—that is, I am sorry—that is, I mean it would have been as well if we had been reconciled."

"Would to Heaven you had!" replied Albert.

"It was entirely your father's fault that it was not so. Why the devil did he not write, and apologize for his conduct?"

"My father's conduct needed no apology," said Albert; "I must not hear his memory reflected on."

"You shall hear what I please. Pray, sir, do you intend to be my heir?"

"*Your heir*, sir! I really have never bestowed a thought on the subject."

"Oh, you have not—Because, if you do, you should remember the behaviour befitting an heir."

"That I have yet to learn," said Albert.

"Why, sir, it is not to thwart me in every thing I say; it is to merit my good will by humility and submission, not provoke

voke me by obstinacy and contradiction."

"If abject submission can alone gain your favour," replied Albert, "vain will be the trial. I think I possess too much of the blood of colonel O'Bryen ever to be able to effect it."

"That's what you call breaking my head, and giving me a plaister; though, to say the truth, I think *you are* a good deal like me when I was a young man."

Albert bowed.

"Oh, no compliments—I know they are all grimace with you; and while you make them, you only laugh in your sleeve."

"The brother of my beloved mother can never be an object of any thing but veneration to me, while he remembers the respect due to my revered parents, whom it would ill become me to hear lightly spoken of."

"Sir, I am your very humble servant," pulling off his hat, and bowing. "Your father,

father, I confess, was a brave, though a proud fellow; to be sure, he wrote to my father, who, I believe, returned the letter unopened. But should he not, after his death, have written to me?"

"Submission to a parent was a duty—it might not strike him as so essential to a brother; besides, as you inform me you had met (and indeed I have heard him mention the affair with respect to your moderation), it would not have been unworthy a brave man who had conquered to make the first advances."

"What then? suppose we did meet—he was devilish provoking, for I saw he was careful not to hurt me; and though I fenced well, and did disarm him in the long run, yet he refused to relinquish my sister."

"Your request was impossible to be granted; their love was mutual, nor did it ever subside."

"I am glad of that, however; and can but wish—but it is in vain to wish now.

I suppose,

I suppose, young man, you know your mother wrote to me about a twelvemonth since?"

"I did, sir; it was some time after my father's death. You, however, did not favour her with an answer."

"I should have been devilish cunning if I had. The letter was addressed to my seat in Ireland, and I was on duty in the West Indies, where it was sent after me, but did not reach there until two months after I left that country; from thence it was again transmitted to Ireland, where, a month since, I received it. Perhaps I was as glad of a reconciliation as another, and set off immediately to England, where I arrived the day before yesterday."

"The day before yesterday!" repeated Albert.

"Yes, sir, the day before yesterday—when I hastened to her address, but found the house shut up, and no information to be gained—but that the lady was dead, and her son in jail."

"I *was*

"I *was* in prison, sir," said Albert.

"And pray how the plague came you there?" replied the colonel; "for that the people could not tell me, nor yet where you were confined."

"I was in the King's Bench," said Albert.

"I ask you once more how you got there? or, what is yet stranger, how the devil you got out?"

"I was confined for debt," returned Albert: "the humanity of a lady released me."

A loud and long whistle.—"I wish you joy, Mr. *Humanity!* I hope you requited her charity?"

"As yet it has not been in my power—nor ever indeed can it—for she not only rescued me from the horrors of a prison, but placed me in comfort and happiness, where I now reside. She also took on herself the protection of Marian, to whom, with a delicacy known to few, she insisted on advancing her first year's salary to

release

release me, and that before I ever saw her."

"Egad, I will walk a pilgrimage to Mecca but *I will see her*. I beg her pardon, but, to tell the truth, I thought it was one of those good-natured ladies that young fellows sometimes meet with."

"Sir," replied Albert, with visible pique, "I am sorry you could entertain so despicable an opinion of me."

"What, you are off again, all on the high ropes! Don't provoke me; it is neither your interest nor duty."

"As to interest, I have nothing to reply," said Albert; "but for duty, is it consistent with yours to form such undeserved opinions of me?"

"*My* duty! confound me if ever I heard so impudent a dog in my life! Why, you could not behave worse if I was not worth a sixpence."

"My mother's brother would to me be equally respectable, though he did not possess the value of one."

 "That's

"That's right again—rub off as you go. But pray what the plague duty do I owe you? while to me you now owe the same duty as to your father, and ought to pay it as such."

"And will pay it as such," returned Albert, softened at the expression, and taking the old man's hand respectfully.

The colonel's feelings, all awakened in favour of his nephew, could bear no more; but throwing his arms around his neck, his tears wetted Albert's face.—"And I will receive it as such," said he: "thou shalt never know sorrow more, if money can keep it from thee."

Albert made every return that a heart replete with gratitude, yet devoid of servility, could suggest; and perfectly satisfied with each other, they reached town, where the colonel called a coach, which was ordered to the hotel where he for the present had taken up his residence. Albert in vain remonstrated that his absence would be inconvenient to the office; opposition

position threw his uncle into paroxysms of anger; he therefore wrote a note to the banker, in some measure explaining his situation, saying he had met with a near relation whom he had never before seen, and hoped it would plead his excuse for absence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

We are too apt to judge of others by ourselves.

The colonel and his nephew having breakfasted, the old gentleman consented he should wait on the banker, premising, however, that he would accompany him; which Albert very willingly agreed to.

The banker was of too generous a disposition not to be pleased at the good for-

tune of his clerk, for by the loquacity of the colonel he soon understood it such.—"Lookee, sir," said he, "I am very much obliged to you for your kindness to my nephew, and must trouble you with my current cash as I get it remitted from Ireland. I am sorry to put you to any inconvenience, but I am devilish glad I have found him notwithstanding, and will willingly make your young men any compensation for the additional trouble his absence may occasion them."

"None, sir, is necessary," returned the banker. "I rejoice at Mr. Montgomery's success, for I truly believe him worthy his good fortune."

"Good fortune!—that, sir, is as it turns out. He is a plaguy impudent fellow, for all he can look so demure. If he provokes me, I will die without a will, and then he will be only my heir-at-law."

An involuntary smile played on the features of Albert.

"Come, sir, don't grin." Then turning

to

to the banker—"You must dine with us to-day, sir," said he, "and I will tell you the whole story; I am sure it will divert you. I met him by chance in a coffee-house, where I had only called to beguile my vexation because I could not find him. Oh, he's a pickled dog! I should never have seen him in his airs and graces if I had not taken him in. Egad, he should not have known me these three days, but he provoked me so that I could keep the secret no longer."

"My accounts, sir," said Albert to the banker, "I am ready to deliver at your leisure."

"Not to-day," exclaimed the colonel, "not to-day; I would not part with you to-day for an emperor, nor to the cham of Tartary. This gentleman will dine with us—business can be settled another time; this is a day of jubilee—egad, one of the happiest days of my life!"

The banker accepted the invitation, and

the colonel and his nephew bade him good-morning.

The colonel, on their return, asked every particular his memory could suggest concerning his late brother and sister, with as much caution as his temper could allow, avoiding all reflections that would vex his nephew, and who, in return, gave him every information he could require.

"There's one thing yet I want to know," at length said the colonel. "You shifted off the question this morning, I recollect it well. Pray how came you in debt?"

"In the state of our finances, it was not very miraculous that I should incur a debt."

"Perhaps not," returned the colonel; "but what was it for?"

"For—for," replied Albert, hesitating, unwilling to wound his uncle with the recital that the body of his sister had been arrested—"it was for house-rent."

"That's a flam, however. The people of

of whom I inquired told me you were arrested even while your mother lay dead; that the bailiff, it was said, staid with you in the house, and that you went to jail the day after the funeral. Egad, I was going to hunt every prison in the metropolis until I found you. But come, come, confess—What was the debt for? Rent it could not be; for you were not answerable for your parents' debts if they had any, and you assured me they did not owe a shilling."

Albert was vexed to be thus pressed, but remained silent.

"What," returned the colonel, "it was a private affair, was it—one of those little debts gentlemen sometimes incur, and that you do not wish discussed?"

"I do not indeed wish it discussed," answered Albert; "the recapitulation would give me pain, and you no pleasure: favour me by letting that information suffice."

"Well, hang it, let it then; don't be

grave about it—we have all our faults—I don't expect you perfect."

"I am far from perfection, sir," answered Albert, glad to change the subject.

"You are as well as other boys, I believe. You are not a coward, I'll swear; and for other faults, you will get the better of them as you grow older," winking slyly: "I know that by experience."

"I hope I shall," returned Albert, hardly restraining a smile at the mistake.

"Take care of yourself though; look out a good pretty wench and get married; you need not much mind fortune."

"Marriage is a serious business," returned Albert, "and requires so many concomitant circumstances to render it happy, that I shall be in no haste."

"There you are out, however," replied the colonel; "haste or leisure, all the same thing—a mere lottery, not a capital prize in a thousand; the fear of drawing a blank has ever kept me a bachelor."

"I know

"I know not but it may have the same effect on me," answered Albert.

"Hang me if it shall, sir, though," returned he, petulantly. "I shall choose to see an heir to my estate, and egad you shall find me one."

The discourse then changed to Albert's obligations to Mrs. Stanhope; and the colonel expressing a wish to see Marian, it was agreed they should, the ensuing week, take a journey into Dorsetshire, the colonel insisting that in the meantime Albert should not inform his sister what had passed, as in that case, he observed, he might perhaps see her as well as her brother in all her glory.

Albert, though he would willingly have informed her immediately of the event that had taken place, yet thought the satisfaction she would necessarily experience better protracted for a few days, than hazard displeasing him; he therefore pledged his word to the colonel to be secret, claiming in return his promise to be

silent to Mrs. Stanhope, in regard to the duel with Frederic, and also on the events which preceded it. This was a restraint the colonel by no means approved, but which he at length consented to, though not without some reluctance.

The banker, as appointed, dined with them, and a settlement took place the ensuing day, the colonel accompanying his nephew, whom he could not as yet bear out of his sight.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIV.

Humiliation—A Mistake—And a disappointed Damsel.

The morning of the duel, after Albert's departure, Frederic had remained overcome with rage and vexation, in his heart applauding, while he envied the temper, skill, and forbearance of his opponent. Berners in the meantime had staid at home; where he would even have prayed, had he supposed prayers of any utility, for the success of his pupil; but all that the priest and nurse had taught were long since forgotten, or, if ever recollected, only for the purpose of ridicule. The return of Frederic he waited with anxiety, not only on the score of revenge against Albert,

but also on account of his personal safety; for, if he had a predilection in favour of any man, it was undoubtedly for him. At length he returned, and, with an appearance that bespoke distraction—"Berners," said he, wildly, throwing himself into a chair, "I am disgraced for ever. I feel I am a villain; neither your friendship nor sophistry can palliate that. This hateful morning will never be obliterated from my memory."

At another time Berners might have answered with warmth; but convinced, from the emotion of Frederic, that he had conquered, he surmised that his concern merely arose from the natural horror of having for the first time killed a man.—"Ridiculous!" exclaimed he; "you are as weak as a girl. Man is born to die, and whether he dies in his bed or in the field, where's the difference?—whether of a fever or a bullet, on this day or twenty years hence, to the eye of reason it can make no difference. The fellow was a

saucy

saucy overbearing bully; I rejoice you have chastised him, and only lament the task was reserved for you."

"So do I, from my soul," returned Frederic, petulantly; "would the whole had fallen on yourself!"

"I wish it had; you should have seen I could behave like a man."

"Behave like the devil!" returned Frederic, with increased bitterness. "Montgomery's behaviour was indeed worthy a man, while mine was that of a hot-brained ruffian boy."

"I am glad his behaviour met your approbation," answered Berners, ironically, his hopes somewhat weakened. "If you have wounded him dangerously, we will instantly provide for your safety; if otherwise, we have no occasion."

"Wounded *him!*" repeated Frederic, the mistake in some measure striking him; "the only person wounded is myself, and that in a manner never to be healed."

Berners' disappointment equalled Frederic's

deric's humiliation, and regardless of further information, he remained silent, until Frederic became more composed, and related the whole—concluding with saying —"By Heaven, I could have turned the pistol against my own head! He treated me like a fool—a boy whose arrogance deserved correction; yet, when he had sufficiently humbled me, asked no concession, but generously returned my sword."

Though this eulogium by no means pleased Berners, yet he endeavoured all in his power to sooth his pupil—truly considering, that as the whole was incurred on his account, it was incumbent on him as much as possible to blunt the acuteness of his feelings.

Frederic, however, peremptorily declared that he would go into Yorkshire for a short time, as he had no doubt the meeting between him and Albert would be talked of; neither did Berners use much persuasion to dissuade him from this intention, though he declined accompanying him, alleging for

for excuse the coldness of Mrs. St. Austyn's behaviour.

Frederic, when somewhat calmer, sat down to write to his mother, informing her, that, if agreeable, he would accompany her into the country. On opening his desk, the letters he had written the night before to Mrs. Stanhope and Marian met his eye, and relapsing into his former paroxysm of rage, he exclaimed—"Would to Heaven there had been occasion for these! I should then have escaped those severe pangs of humiliation that almost distract me."

Mrs. St. Austyn's answer was speedily returned; it informed him that she should leave London the next day, and requested, if he meant to accompany her, that he would be prepared. On the following morning Frederic took an affectionate leave of Berners, promising to write frequently during his absence, Berners agreeing to remain in the lodging until his return.

Though

Though Mrs. St. Austyn had not mentioned Berners in her note, she undoubtedly expected him to be of the party; but on not finding him so, to the great disappointment of Gertrude, did not press it. At the appointed time they left London, even Mrs. St. Austyn apparently less dispirited than either her son or daughter, the latter of whom could by no means account for the voluntary banishment, as she deemed it, of Berners—an event so cruel and vexatious, that she determined, like many other heroines she had read of, that death alone should terminate her grief. The day was however fine, the air keen, and, in despite of sorrow, procured her an excellent appetite to her dinner, as fatigue did also for a good night's rest.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXV.

Satisfaction—Surprise—and Curiosity.

THE colonel and his nephew arrived at the Vale early one morning, having slept within a few miles. Marian was out, walking with the curate's daughter, and Mrs. Stanhope employed in writing letters. The servant, who knew Montgomery, would have gone in quest of his sister; but Albert declined it, desiring only to be announced, when his lady was at leisure; and turning to the colonel, as the servant left them—"As you are a stranger," said he, "my dear sir, how am I to introduce you to Mrs. Stanhope? To deceive her would be taking a liberty I cannot presume to attempt—it might displease her."

The

The colonel paused a moment, at length replied—"Why, as she is alone, we must e'en tell her the truth, and try if we cannot persuade her to forward our scheme. I would not myself, after what has passed, affront her for a thousand pounds."

The servant prevented more discourse, by informing them Mrs. Stanhope would be glad to see them; then led the way to the library, where she was sitting.

"This visit, Mr. Montgomery," said she, "however welcome, is perfectly unexpected. All, I hope, is well in London?" her fears glancing at some dispute with Frederic.

"Perfectly so, madam," returned Albert, in a tone of cheerfulness that instantly banished her fears; "a most fortunate circumstance alone has forced me thus to intrude. This gentleman, whom permit me to present to you, I have lately met; he is my mother's only brother, colonel O'Bryen, and not personally known to me until last week."

"I con-

"I congratulate you, my young friend, on the acquisition of an uncle, and him equally on the acquisition of a nephew, whom I am certain he may be proud of acknowledging."

Albert bowed.

"*I am* proud of the dog, madam," said the colonel; "though there is no occasion to spoil him—he is impudent enough already. However, ingratitude, I believe, is not among the number of his faults; for he readily acknowledges his obligations to you, and that in so warm a manner, that egad I caught the infection, and could not rest until I came to thank you."

"None are due to me, colonel," replied Mrs. Stanhope; "if there are any, they must appertain to his sister: but, in families, these little affairs are not worth mentioning."

"A noble woman!—a glorious friend!" exclaimed the colonel, unable to restrain his rapture. "Ah, madam! would you

but

but assist me in one little whim, it would complete my happiness."

"Name it, colonel."

"Only let me see this boy's sister, without her knowing our relationship. I met him by chance, and fortune favoured the deceit, or I should never have thought of such a thing. In this second case now, madam, would you but condescend to stand in fortune's stead, and let me see her without knowing I was her old surly uncle, I should have her in her natural state, as I had this fellow; whereas, if she knows the truth, she will be screwed up into airs and graces, that I sha'n't know what to make of her for a month."

Mrs. Stanhope laughed at the conceit—"And what say you to this deception, Mr. Montgomery?" demanded she.

"As you, madam, and my uncle please; I have no objection to Marian's being exhibited under as many disadvantages as I laboured myself."

"Disadvantages!

"Disadvantages!—well said, Modesty. It's a good story, faith! I would give twenty guineas to be at liberty to relate it to you."

Albert, sincerely vexed, pulled his uncle by the sleeve.

"Rot the fellow! what now?—Hide your light under a bushel and be hanged!" replied he, in a half-whisper, to his nephew.

"To relate what, colonel?" demanded Mrs. Stanhope.

"Why nothing, nothing, madam—but I met the dog at a public coffee-house, and he was so comical that I shall laugh at it as long as I live. He has now taken up his residence with me, and I don't believe two houses will ever hold us again."

Mrs. Stanhope pressed no more; the satisfaction of the colonel, and the blood that mounted high in Albert's cheek, convinced her that Fortune, in one of her whimsical moods, had introduced them to each other in a fortunate moment; nor did she doubt it was in favour of Albert, whose

whose modesty in relating his story, without mention of family or expectancies, occurred to her memory, and met her warmest approbation, though she did not express it in words.

"Well, colonel," resumed she, "be it as you please in respect of Miss Montgomery; there are some disadvantages, if I may call them such, that operate in our favour; as you mean to take your niece by surprise, take care she don't do as much for you." As she spoke, she discovered Marian and her companion crossing the lawn before the house.—"There now, colonel," added she, "here come the lady in question and her friend. I have heard much of sympathy and impulse; will either lead you to decide which is your niece?"

The colonel viewed them a moment with visible emotion, then exclaimed—"For a thousand pounds, the tall one; for she has the air, gait, and shape of my sister."

"Well

"Well guessed, my good sir, however," answered the lady. "But one thing more, for we have no time to lose—she will be here in a moment; as whom must I announce you?"

The colonel paused.—"Plague on't, we should have thought on that before," said he. "Why, let me see; she don't know Albert has left the banker, and may take me for him."

"Well devised: but, peace! I hear her on the stairs."

Marian that moment entered the apartment. The sight of her brother amazed her, but joy stronger than surprise made her unmindful of every other object, and she rushed into his embrace.—"My Albert! my brother!—what unexpected pleasure!" exclaimed she; but perceiving a stranger, though the colonel had walked to the window, she withdrew herself from Albert's arms, and blushing, added—"Pardon me, madam, I did not know you had company:

company: my surprise has betrayed me into rudeness."

"No apology is necessary, my dear," returned Mrs. Stanhope. "Permit me to introduce you to your brother's friend, the gentleman with whom he now resides."

Marian curtseyed—she had no doubt it was the banker; when the old gentleman, taking her by the hand, imprinted a hearty kiss on her cheek, saying—"Sure enough you are a pretty girl; but always remember to be polite, and kiss the old fellows first."

Marian felt displeased; but a stifled laugh on both the features of Mrs. Stanhope and Albert suspended her resentment.

"A very fine girl, egad! I don't wonder at——"

Albert pulled him by the sleeve.

"Hang it, mind your own business; I am not such a fool as that neither. You don't see many such shapes now-a-days. What

What a fine fall she has with her shoulders!" viewing her with scrutinizing attention. "Why, her complexion is transparent; she has the family eyes and hair to a shaving."

"Do you think so?" said Mrs. Stanhope, when she could speak for laughter, supposing, as that observation had escaped him, that he meant to discover himself.

"Yes, yes," replied he, endeavouring to recover his mistake—"very like—they are the picture of her brother's."

Mrs. Stanhope laughed more than before.

"I thought my eyes were black," returned Albert.

"What does that signify, Mr. Sharpshins? Black or blue, eyes are eyes, and hair, hair. Hers may be a handsome likeness."

"That's easily granted," replied Albert, laughing.

"Never mind his grinning, my dear," returned the colonel, "come and sit by

 me

me; though I own you are like him, you are a devilish deal handsomer."

Marian, abashed and confounded, knew not how to act; she looked on her brother and the colonel with surprise, on Mrs. Stanhope with curiosity.

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Stanhope, "you must not mind the cheerful sallies of my friend, or indeed, more properly, your brother's; I am sure you will welcome him, when you know he came on purpose to oblige him."

"Oblige *him!*—no, egad! I came on purpose to oblige myself. I did, to be sure, expect to find a fine girl—but not such a charming girl as you are!"

Marian, though confused at the whole scene, observing that Mrs. Stanhope and her brother received the stranger's oddities with mirth and apparent pleasure, determined to do the same, though his blunt praises to herself, and his uncommon behaviour to her brother, astonished her. At Mrs. Stanhope's request she played

some

some select pieces of music, and sung a few airs, that threw the old gentleman into such raptures, that, again forgetting his caution, he exclaimed—"I never heard such a fascinating little puss in my life. *She* may pick and choose for a husband. She will be no lottery blank, however, neither in person nor pocket; she will have ten thousand pounds on her wedding-day."

Marian now formed the same opinion as Albert had before done, that he was insane, and looked on him with a tenderness and pity that convinced him of the slip he had again made.

"That is, I mean, my dear, you—you *deserve* ten thousand pounds: to be sure you mayn't expect such a thing—but there is nothing impossible."

"Marian thinks such an event next to impossible, sir," said Albert.

"How do *you* know what she thinks? But you must for ever be putting in your word; can't you let her speak for herself?"

"Such expectations, sir," replied Marian, timidly, "are as distant from my thoughts as from my wishes, while I enjoy the happiness of Mrs. Stanhope's protection."

"Mrs. Stanhope is an angel, you are a little cherub, and I am an old wizard, that can tell your fortune. You will be very lucky hereafter."

"I am already so, sir," replied she, looking with gratitude on Mrs. Stanhope.

The bell at that moment announcing dinner, they adjourned to the saloon, where, to Marian's great relief, the conversation became universal. The colonel and his nephew admired the surrounding country. Mrs. Stanhope, addressing the latter, said—"If you were not better engaged this afternoon, I would ask you to ride about two miles, and see a purchase I am inclined to make, the sale of which takes place to-morrow."

"I shall do it with pleasure, madam. And you, sir," turning to his uncle, "will

perhaps

perhaps favour me with your company?"

"No, sir, I shall not favour you; I shall favour myself by staying with these ladies."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Continuation of Satisfaction and Surprise —Curiosity satisfied.

AFTER dinner, Albert prepared to oblige Mrs. Stanhope, though he assured her he was by no means a judge of the value of landed estates.—"The house," said she, "I have no occasion for, though it is in perfect repair; nor should I have thought of the land, but that the poor people who are resident on the estate have been ground by extortion to the earth, and have pressed me

me so very warmly, if possible, to become the purchaser, that though I had rather be excused, yet I do not like to refuse."

"And what price may it bear, do you think, madam?" demanded the colonel.

"At the most, not exceeding six thousand pounds," returned she.

"I'll buy it, I'll buy it, egad! that is, if you do not wish the purchase, madam," replied the colonel. "We shall be near neighbours, and you will perhaps sometimes condescend to be troubled with an odd old fellow."

"Indeed, my good sir," returned Mrs. Stanhope, "I wish it may suit you. I do not want it, though I cannot refuse the petitions of the poor people, whom, however, I think I can trust with you. Ride over to-morrow morning, and see what you think of it."

"Your compliment, my dear madam, I will treasure in my memory," replied the colonel. "I am an odd fellow, but the poor shall never wish the devil to have

me on their account. As to my seeing the estate, I will ride over in a day or two; Albert may go this afternoon, and if it pleases him, it will suit me."

Marian looked astonished, while Mrs. Stanhope expected that all would be now discovered; but the colonel, after a pause, endeavouring to recover his mistake, added—"That is, I mean—I mean, if it pleases me, it will suit him."

The afternoon being fine, Albert soon after departed on horseback, accompanied by the steward, to view the estate.

For some time after Albert's departure the conversation was restrained. Mrs. Stanhope longed to relieve the anxiety of Marian, which was plainly imprinted on her features; Marian, bewildered in a chaos of strange ideas (though she had no doubt of the identity of the banker), longed to see either Mrs. Stanhope or her brother alone; while the sole cause of the confusion chuckled in secret, and determined, as Albert was gone, to spare no

pains in discovering what misconduct had thrown him into prison, which he had no doubt his sister could tell.—"If I get but a hole in the dog's coat," said he, as he ruminated on the subject, "I shall have him under my thumb: as it is, he appears so perfect, that I look up to him with admiration. It is plain, by his concealment, there is some secret in the case, and it can be nothing but a wench; nay, his aversion to marriage proves it. If it was any thing in his favour, he would be ready enough to own it. The slut was extravagant, I suppose, and the debt was for her."

Impressed with these ideas, yet scarcely knowing how to introduce his doubts, a considerable time passed before he ventured to say to Mrs. Stanhope—"Albert was in the King's Bench before he became acquainted with you, madam?"

"I believe he was," returned Mrs. Stanhope.

"Your goodness in releasing him shall never be forgotten," said the colonel.

"I have

"I have already told you, sir," returned Mrs. Stanhope, in rather a dissatisfied tone, "that he was under no obligation to me; it was his sister who released him."

Marian appeared ready to restore the action to its right owner, but there was a command to silence on Mrs. Stanhope's features that closed her lips.

"I am not curious," said the colonel; "there is not a better fellow, nor a braver, on the face of the earth, to my mind, than Albert. I bless the hour that I met with him: he shall have what I die possessed of."

The insanity again struck Marian, who gave a momentary start, which instantly recalled him to recollection.

"That is, I mean if he deserves it," continued he. "I particularly wish to know what he was in prison for; I am apt to think you can tell. It sha'n't be the worse for you, Marian—I beg pardon, Miss Montgomery, I mean—if you will inform me what you know."

"Is it possible you do not know?" demanded Mrs. Stanhope.

"On my soul, I do not!" returned he; "the dog would not tell me—he even looked grave about it; so I was obliged to give it up, not to vex him; for he said it pained him, and that it would, if known, grieve me; and so, egad, it would, if it was any harm; but as for trifles, I know by myself nobody can help them—they must be forgiven."

The delicacy of Albert was at once plain to Mrs. Stanhope, and, determined he should not lose in his uncle's opinion, she turned to Marian, saying—"My dear child, I am going to impose a painful task upon you; I hope I shall never be necessitated to do so again. I see this gentleman has formed some erroneous opinion respecting your brother's imprisonment, and which his extreme delicacy has prevented him from clearing up; will you favour me by setting him right?"

"But

"But if my brother has declined it, madam——" said Marian.

"In the meantime he suffers in the opinion of his best friend," interrupted Mrs. Stanhope, "and that from a point of meritorious delicacy. Come, be above weak fears; you have flattered me by calling me your friend; believe me, this gentleman is equally so; make him your confidant, relate every circumstance of the event that carried your brother into confinement."

Marian, giddy with the various ideas that bewildered her, knew not how to comply, nor yet refuse; the development, she however considered, could only tend to her brother's honour—a reflection that, at length determined her to oblige Mrs. Stanhope, and arrest her brother's character from any stigma that might overshadow it.

"My dear madam," said she, "painful as is the task imposed on me, I think it

my duty not to refuse; I will, however, simply keep to the necessary events.

"Suppose then you see my angel mother stretched a lifeless clod, the attentions of her children useless, and their tears for the first time disregarded. On one side, bending over her, was myself, stupid with grief; on the other, Albert, his manly features disfigured with sorrow, yet his voice soothing, entreating me to comfort, and to leave the melancholy scene before us. At that moment—merciful God! the remembrance will never die; surely filial sorrow ought to be respected, and death secure us from oppression—a loud and confused noise disturbed us, and shortly after four ill-favoured men rushed into the room, the foremost of whom advancing, said he arrested the body for thirty pounds arrears of rent, and which, if not paid before the funeral, he could not claim. As he spoke, he attempted to approach; but Albert, who appeared at once transformed into

into a fury, struck him down, vowing he would kill the first that attempted to touch her. I cannot describe my feelings at that moment; sorrow for the dead, and anguish for the living, combined to overpower me. I flew to Albert, shrieking aloud, and clasped his neck, so that he could not immediately release himself—an action which, though involuntary, I believe prevented more mischief.

"The men in the meantime drawing back, said—'Resistance is vain; we do but our duty—we are employed.'—'And for what?' answered Albert—'what would you do? This cannot be law—the dead are surely exempt from it.'—'Why, look you, master,' said one of the fellows; 'you are a Scotchman, I think they say; they are Presbyterians, and we are church-and-king men; so you see our religion is different, and our law perhaps so too. Dead or alive, people here must pay their debts.'—'But surely,' answered Albert, 'there is some alternative; for, by my soul, my mother's

mother's body shall not be insulted nor removed, but to its last receptacle, while I have life! I am willing to give my personal security for the money, and to pay any interest until the debt be discharged.' —'Why, master, now you begin to talk reason; we are never hard where we think gentlemen will be generous. There's my man now—you have broke his head; it's common in those cases to give him something to pay the doctor.'—'I will give him any thing, if you will but leave us now,' exclaimed I, drawing towards him, and, unseen by Albert, slipping half-a-guinea into his hand.—'It was only the heat of passion,' resumed he, putting up the money; 'the young gentleman and lady are not used to such affairs. Go down stairs a bit; I will talk to them myself—I warrant they will come round.'

"His men obeyed, when Albert again offered his security, and to pay every expence that had been incurred.—'Why, master, you seem good-natured,' said the

bailiff:

bailiff: 'I generally know my men. Thirty pound is a good round sum, to which you may add the expences. Now, if I thought you would *acknowledge my friendship*, I would put you up to a good thing; for, to say the truth, I have no great liking for your creditor, though I do a great deal of business for him; but then I have always a confounded work to get the money.'—'I have already told you I am willing to give security: will that be accepted? Be as concise as possible.'—'Ah, master, you are a mere greenhorn at law, I see that, or you would not talk of its being concise! What would become of the lawyers if it was?'

"I saw Albert could scarcely restrain his temper, and therefore, though almost sinking with anguish, entreated the man to be explicit, and we would requite him. —'The young lady understands reason. What harm can they do your mother? None. Let them take the body then; by jingo,

jingo, he will soon be glad to be rid of it again!'

"Though almost distracted myself with the brutality of this speech, I saw Albert's face of a burning crimson; and fearful of more violence, I again clung round him, and entreated him to patience.—'Well, well,' returned the fellow, 'as you please—you know best—I but offered friendly advice. I may take your security, for the creditor told me so; will you then give a bond, and surrender yourself in your mother's stead?'—'Willingly,' returned Albert, 'on certain conditions; the first of which is, that I remain here until after the funeral—for those cares my sister is unequal to; secondly, that I may be allowed time to place her in security.'—'But can you pay for such indulgence, master?' answered the fellow; 'if you can, well and good—I will try to manage it.'

"That point being answered to the bailiff's satisfaction, they adjourned into another

other apartment, where a bond was executed, by which my excellent and beloved Albert gave himself up to the horrors of a prison, to preserve from insult the remains of a parent."

"A brave boy! a noble fellow!" interrupted the colonel. "What an old dog was I to suspect him! I know now he only concealed it out of kindness; he thought I should be ready to hang myself; and so I am, egad! But go on, my dear," added he, seeing Marian astonished; "I am sorry I interrupted you."

"Proceed, Miss Montgomery," said Mrs. Stanhope; "your disagreeable task, I think, must be nearly finished. Like this gentleman, I will predict that some unexpected happiness attends you."

"Good Heaven! what can you mean?—every thing bewilders me; but I obey. The business settled, the bailiff left one of his men in the house to guard my brother until the funeral was over, and myself placed with Mrs. Mosely, who had, ever since

since our arrival in town, served us with what trifles we wanted. These expences left us totally without money; and though then I did not know it, Albert was necessitated to sell his watch before he went to prison. Though Mrs. Mosely declared that my work paid for my board, I am well convinced to the contrary, and was grieved to depend on her whose circumstances were not over-flourishing, as she had considerably hurt herself for her brother-in-law. This determined me, even without consulting Albert, to do something that would take the weight from her, and enable me, in case of necessity, to assist him. By chance Mrs. St. Austyn purchased some millinery at the shop, and mentioned wanting a servant; in consequence of which I waited on her the day following. She did not approve me: I was destined to greater happiness—my ever-honoured, my revered benefactress was with her, and, delighting to snatch the unhappy from despair and sorrow, sought

sought me out, engaged me, liberated my brother, and fixed my poor services, but warmest gratitude, unalterably hers."

"Bless her! bless her!" said the colonel, "and all who have assisted you! Poor dear child! driven even to seek a service! But we must requite this Mrs. Mosely—she shall make thee the smartest suit of frippery in all England; or, if she will come and live with us, egad, she shall never want a home, nor a guinea, while I possess one."

"Sir," replied Marian, in a voice of astonishment; but, after a moment's pause, she added—"Pardon me, the whole of this day I have been bewildered in a labyrinth of doubt and conjecture. Your apparent satisfaction, madam—your prediction that unexpected happiness awaits me—Albert's uncommon cheerfulness—this gentleman's behaviour to him, nay, his behaviour to myself—all conspire to declare something extraordinary. Ah! his kindness does not appear like that of a

new

new acquaintance, but rather as the affection and friendship of——"

"A father," interrupted the colonel, snatching her to his arms. "I will be thy father, and thou shalt be my pet lamb; and forget that I was thy old uncle O'Bryen, who never sought out thy parents, to tell them my heart was open to receive them, and my purse to relieve their necessities."

Marian was for some minutes too much astonished to reply, but at length sinking from the colonel's embrace to his feet, she clasped his knees, while the old man reclined his face on her shoulder, and, "although unused to the melting mood," sobbed audibly.

"Oh, my mother! my beloved mother!" at length she exclaimed, "had she but lived to this hour, this happy hour—or could she but be permitted to look down from her seat of blessedness, and see her children thus caressed, it would enhance her joys: yet, weak that I am! her joys

admit

admit of no increase—her blameless life insured the height of bliss."

The colonel's tears fell fast as Marian's, while Mrs. Stanhope's accompanied them, though her heart exulted when she considered the change that had taken place.

"Did my poor dear sister never—never mention her unkind brother?" at length asked the colonel, raising his niece, and placing her by his side.

"Yes, frequently, sir; a hundred little minute occurrences of your infancy she took pleasure to recapitulate, and which she usually concluded by saying—'Ah! I little thought that O'Bryen would ever cease to love me.'"

"Nor did I ever," returned the colonel; "but my cursed pride—and your father was as bad as myself—one line would have brought me to his arms."

"Half a one would have brought him to yours," returned Marian.

"With hearts so inclined to a reconciliation,"

ciliation," said Mrs. Stanhope, "I am astonished how a coldness could subsist."

"Pride, cursed family pride, madam," returned the colonel. "Sir James Montgomery, brother to the lieutenant (then but a midshipman), first commenced the difference, by saying his brother might marry better; in consequence of which my sister was forbidden, under pain of her father's displeasure, to hold any correspondence with him. But the command was vain—we found out they continued to write to each other, and my sister scarcely ever went out but they were sure to meet.

"Exasperated at this, my father had high words with the lieutenant, who, even to his face, declared he would pursue her. In consequence of this I interfered, and we met, and fought; but I must do him the justice to say, he was so careful not to wound me, that he could not defend himself as he ought, and I at length disarmed

him;

him; but, obstinate to the last, he refused to give up my sister, and the contest was left where it began.

"After this, as we heard from her servant, the lieutenant wrote her word, that the only means to prevent all further controversy was to espouse him immediately; for, however acrimonious we might be against Albert Montgomery, we should have more respect to the feelings of a daughter and sister than to wish to make her a widow. This advice was too conformable to Marian's taste for it to be refused; and they, a few days after, fled—their only confidant being the servant, from whom, by threats, we obtained the truth.

"Sir James Montgomery, as proud and haughty a rascal as ever lived, swore never to forgive them, nor yet to make any allowance; for, by the will of his father, Albert was totally in his power: my father swore as much, and even returned a letter

letter or two unopened which were sent him: in short, the breach appeared to grow wider and wider, not only on our side, but also between Albert and his brother; for he would not abate an atom of the respect he thought due to his wife from his own relations. The only friend the young couple possessed was an uncle, who, at his death, five years after their marriage, left them about a thousand pounds, and a small house in Scotland, where the lieutenant, after receiving a wound that in some measure disabled him, retired.

"My father lived until six years since, dying rich at a very advanced age, but perfectly superannuated, which I trust will excuse his never mentioning my poor sister. But what can excuse myself? Nothing. I was in actual service, had a government abroad, which, together with the long time that had elapsed since she left us, made her almost forgotten; or, if she

she was at times remembered, the traces she left on my memory were so weakened by absence, that they soon disappeared.

"A letter I received from her dispersed every thing but affection; I felt myself an unnatural dog for having so long neglected her, and set off as soon as possible; but was properly punished—I was too late—she had been dead many months; and all that now remains for me is to make her children the only amends in my power."

Mrs. Stanhope thanked the colonel, and apologized for the explanation her question had brought forward.

"No compliments, madam—I don't deserve them. I have been a sad brute; but I truly believe, if I had not found this boy and girl, I should have lost my senses; and, egad! I punished myself pretty well; every night and morning I read over my sister's letter, and was as miserable as I deserved; but now, though I shall not respect her [illegible]s, I will only read it

it on Sundays, lest I should ever forget my duty."

"Albert and myself knew my mother had written," replied Marian; "but her tenderness spared us the knowledge of the contents."

"You shall see it, madam," said he, addressing Mrs. Stanhope, "and judge whether I could be proof against it."

Mrs. Stanhope would have excused herself, but the colonel was peremptory, and presenting the letter, added—"Read, read, dear madam, read it—but not now—faith, I could not stand it: you can give it me back to-morrow.—But see, yonder comes Albert up the avenue. How well the dog sits his horse! Egad, I never saw a more graceful fellow in my life! He is none of your wishy-washy, lath-and-plaster, loose-limbed masters: yet, for all he's so finely formed, he's devilish strong. I shall never forget the night——"

"What night, s[illegible]manded Marian, observing he suddenly p[illegible]

"Pish!

"Pish! no matter what night—it was a lucky night for you, and for him too, and that's enough; maids should never be curious."

END OF VOL. I.

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